

Sharan in Iran; hostages likely topic

Nicosia (AP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharrah, who said last month he would ask Iran for its help in freeing Western hostages in Lebanon, arrived in Tehran Sunday. The official Islamic Republic News Agency reported that Sharan was welcomed at the airport by his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati as he began his two-day trip. Velayati referred to the "important strategic ties" between the two countries and said Sharan's visit would contribute to increasing these ties, the agency reported. The agency said officials of the two countries frequently discuss Lebanon, Palestine, the Middle East and the Muslim World. It did not mention specifically the issue of the hostages. Last month Sharan told Peggy Say, sister of American hostage Terry Anderson, that he would raise the issue of Iranian help to free the 18 Westerners held in Lebanon by pro-Iranian groups. He said he would "work intensively with Iranian leaders" for the hostages' release and would bring up the subject during his trip to Tehran.

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Qasem urges dialogue with Soviets

LONDON (Agencies) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan al-Qasbi has called for a dialogue with the Soviet Union over the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel, saying that Moscow was injecting the Middle East with the danger of a new war by allowing its Jews to emigrate to the Zionist state. "Injecting Israel with human resources who could end up in the occupied lands will end the peace process," Qasbi told the London-based Al-Hayat newspaper. "It is necessary to start a quiet and objective dialogue with the Soviet Union because it is unthinkable that the Soviet Union will contribute in injecting the area with the threat of a new war, he said. "This war, if it takes place, will extend beyond the region and will have its effect on neighbouring countries, including the Soviets." More than 9,000 Soviet Jews have gone to Israel since January and Israeli officials say 400,000 others have applied to emigrate to Israel. Israeli statements have indicated that many of them will settle in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

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Nathan to seek Yemeni emigration

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli pacifist Abie Nathan said Sunday he planned to visit South Yemen this week to work for Yemeni Jews to be allowed to emigrate. Nathan, who served a four-month jail term in Israel for meeting Yasser Arafat, told Israel Radio the Palestine leader had agreed to help him gain permission to enter South Yemen. Between 3,000 and 4,000 Jews live in South Yemen, according to Jewish Agency estimates.

Assad gets Soviet message

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said Sunday it had received a message from the Soviet Union. The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) said the message from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, dealing with developments in the Soviet Union and bilateral cooperation, was handed to President Hafez al-Assad Saturday by Soviet Ambassador Alexander Zotov.

Shevardnadze visits Africa

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze left Sunday for a seven-nation tour of Africa after declaring that all aspects of Moscow's cooperation with the Third World were under review. The highlight of his nine-day trip is his visit to Namibia Wednesday, where he will attend independence celebrations and meet U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. On the eve of his departure for Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Nigeria, Shevardnadze told the Soviet news agency Novosti that "the future lies with new progressive forms of cooperation."

New Delhi survives crisis

NEW DELHI (R) — India's minority National Front government survived its first major internal crisis on Sunday when Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal withdrew his two-day-old resignation. Chimanbhai Patel, spokesman for the front alliance, said Lal agreed to remain in the government after receiving a letter from Prime Minister V.P. Singh. Singh's four-month-old government needs support from both left-wing parties and right-wing Hindu revivalists and there had been speculation that some other members of parliament might also desert it.

Arafat pledges to defend Libya

ROME (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat pledged Sunday to defend Libya "with our blood" from U.S. threats, stating in a report monitored in Rome and London, said Arafat spoke Sunday after a meeting with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

Latvia, Estonia elect legislators

MOSCOW (AP) — Voters in five Soviet republics elected local legislators Sunday, with crucial runoff in the Slavic heartland and pro-independence candidates in Latvia and Estonia hoping to prevail as in neighboring Lithuania. The elections in Latvia and Estonia are the first multi-party balloting for the parliaments of the two Baltic republics. Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0400 GMT) and were closing at 8 p.m. (1700 GMT). Results were not expected until Monday or later.

Iran's judge says Rushdie decree stands

Nicosia (R) — Iran's top judge repeated Sunday that the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's order to kill British author Salman Rushdie had to be carried out. "The verdict issued by his eminence the leader must be implemented and cannot be revised," Mohammad Ali Yazdi told a news conference reported by Tehran Radio.

After lengthy debate, deputies vote for closed session Tuesday

House votes to debate corruption in 'secret'

By Salameh Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — After a lengthy debate Sunday, the Lower House of Parliament voted in favour of convening a closed session to discuss the outcome of the Finance Committee's preliminary investigations into the Kingdom's debt problem and financial and administrative corruption.

Out of the 63 deputies present, 44 voted in favour of a closed session, to be convened Tuesday as proposed by 12 deputies who are members of the Finance Committee.

The committee's chairman, Abdullah Ensour, argued strongly in favour of keeping the session closed so as to avoid "libeling" people and obstructing the due process of the law.

He explained that Tuesday's session "will deal with names of people and projects, and declarations about some present or former officials which could be harmful."

Ensour, a former member of the Rifai cabinet, said keeping the session closed was "necessary to protect people's honour and to avoid sensationalism that could be harmful for and detrimental to the investigation."

He added that Parliament "is not the judiciary and does not issue rulings. We have some facts with details, and some with no details... we must start somewhere and we are starting with

our preliminary report which will be followed by other reports on corruption and parties responsible for the debt."

The former planning minister said that if Tuesday's session were to be open, the committee would not be able to present all the facts to deputies and would be depriving the discussion from instrumental information.

Justice Minister Yusef Mbaddeen, who is also a deputy from Karak, said the session must be closed "because it is in the interest of the investigation to keep things under a lid until cases are ruled upon by the judiciary."

Deputy Thougan Hindawi (Irbid) made a strong case against the closed session. He said that after studying interpretations of the article in the Constitution, which allows the holding of such sessions, "it was revealed to me that the House can resort to closed sessions as an exception, only if there was a conviction that making the session public would harm national security or cause military, political, social or economic damage."

Hindawi asserted that "it is clear that discussing the debt, corruption and economic crimes does not fall under these headings."

He argued that as deputies, "we won in the elections because we promised people in our election programmes to reveal all the facts... the people are still suffering, and if we resort to secrecy in this matter, we would be depriving the people of their right to know the truth as

revealed to us as a result of our search and deliberations and abandoning a major component of our credibility which we gained from the people."

He dismissed as unreasonable assertions that making the discussions public would influence the judiciary. "The judiciary is impartial and honest and is not supposed to be influenced except by its own conviction and objectivity in looking for the truth. It is only through justice that the innocent are vindicated," he said.

Deputy Salim Zou'bi argued that closed sessions "have failed in keeping deliberations within the walls of Parliament." He explained that discussions at the House's two closed sessions earlier this month leaked to the public and were published in some local and foreign newspapers.

"There is more harm in closing the session than opening it to the public," he said. "Such sessions open the way to rumours and the building on rumours which creates an atmosphere of uncertainty among citizens and to negative results."

He also said that it was illogical to ask the House to vote on whether the session should be closed or open when deputies are not aware of the contents of the report.

Deputies Saad Haddadin, Fares Nabulsi, Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi, Faisal Ben Jazi and Hussein Mjalli demanded that the committee provide them with copies of its report before voting on Tuesday's session.

But deputies Tiesh Mari, Abdul Hafiz Alawi and Yusef Al Aithem said there was no harm in having one closed session then opening the rest of the sessions to discuss the report. During the vote count it was noticed that all deputies in the Cabinet, most parliamentarians and members of the Finance Committee voted in favour of a closed session.

Palestinian dies amid Hamas strike against Baker proposal

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A Palestinian man died in a West Bank hospital Sunday, three days after he was hit in the head by a rubber bullet fired by Israeli soldiers subduing stone-throwers, hospital reports said.

Also Sunday, shops and schools in the occupied West Bank and Arab Jerusalem were closed by a general strike called by the fundamentalist Islamic Hamas movement.

The strike was to protest a plan by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to hold preliminary Israeli-Palestinian talks. A recent Hamas leaflet said Baker's proposal was "an American-Zionist conspiracy."

Meanwhile, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel announced it asked the army for an independent review of a raid last December in which soldiers killed two Palestinians and wounded three others while trying to arrest an Arab suspect.

The man who died Sunday was identified as Salim Yacoub Riham, 50. Reports said he was shot Thursday night as he drove a horse-drawn cart through the Al Amari refugee camp.

A doctor at Ramallah hospital said Riham was hit in the head with a single rubber bullet "fired at close range."

Riham's death raised to 664 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers or civilians since the uprising against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip began in December 1987.

Reports said Mazen Al Bishawi, 28, was shot four times in his clothing shop in the Nablus central market by a masked man. Bishawi was suspected of dealing in drugs and prostitution, the reports said.

Meanwhile, reports said that Yasser Salama, who was reported killed last Wednesday in Gaza's Khan Yunis refugee camp as a

suspected collaborator, had escaped her Palestinian attackers and returned home Friday with serious injuries.

In the Gaza Strip Sunday, an 18-year-old Palestinian was in critical condition after he was hit in the head by a plastic bullet in a stone-throwing confrontation with soldiers in Gaza City, hospital officials said.

The youth, a resident of the Jahaliya refugee camp, was evacuated to hospital for further treatment, they said.

The Israeli Civil Rights group's petition was filed with Amnon Strasnow, the army advocate general.

Israeli soldiers raided the home of the Alawneh family in the West Bank village of Jaba last Dec. 22 to arrest a son, Mohammad Alawneh, 22. At the time, the army said it opened fire after encountering resistance to the raid.

Carbomb defused in W. Beirut; artillery battles flare in east

BEIRUT (AP) — A car bomb was defused near a Syrian army base in west Beirut Sunday as rival Christian forces battled with artillery and tanks in mountains north of the city, shattering a shaky two-week-old ceasefire in their mini-war.

Police reported that a driverless navy blue Audi sedan packed with 60 kilograms of explosives was rolled down a street leading to the wrecked Commodore Hotel with its motor and lights off before dawn.

"But it veered slightly to the left and hit a sandbag position on a road intersection about 20 metres from the Commodore and luckily failed to go off," said a police spokesman.

He said the target of the attempted bombing was almost certainly the hotel, where about 100 Syrian soldiers are quartered.

The building is across the street from a seven-storey block housing the Beirut offices of the Associated Press, the U.S. CBS and NBC television networks, the British Broadcasting Corporation and Kuwait's Al Qabas daily.

The police spokesman said bomb disposal experts established that the explosives were set to detonate at 4 a.m. (0200 GMT), but they could not determine why the timing device failed to function.

The car bomb remained undetected for more than two hours, until Syrian sentries began patrolling the area at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT), the spokesman added.

A police sapper, Chief Sergeant Mohammad Idris, removed two boxes of explosives from the car while Syrian officers watched.

Police reported that in the Christian enclave north of the city, replete General Michel Aoun's troops and fighters of the Lebanese Forces militia headed by warlord Samir Geagea pounded each other with artillery and tank barrages all night. There was no immediate report of casualties.

The exchanges in the mountains of Kesrouan province, 32 kilometres north of Beirut followed mortar duels Sunday in which six civilians were killed.

They included a family of four

trapped in a burning underground shelter in the Kesrouan town of Ballounah. Eight other people were wounded.

Saturday's clashes prompted Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir, spiritual head of the dominant Maronite Catholic sect, to warn in his Sunday sermon of "alarmingly increasing threats" of another full-scale bout of fighting between the Christian rivals.

"Let's stop this recklessness," Sfeir declared. "If both sides respect their ceasefire pledges, why are they then rearming, reloading and ceaselessly forluring their positions all over the Christian area."

Arab troublemaker Lakhdar Ibrahim discussed with President Elias Hrawi and Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss ways to resolve Lebanon's deadlocked political crisis, official sources said Sunday.

They said Arab League envoy Ibrahim, who arrived in Beirut Saturday, met separately with Hrawi, Hoss, House Speaker Hussein Husseini and several political and religious leaders.

Carter: Syria ready for direct talks with Israel under international aegis

By Mariam Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter left Jordan Sunday after a three-day visit and arrived in Israel saying that Syrian President Hafez al-Assad had authorised him to say that Syria was ready for direct Syrian-Israeli talks under the umbrella of an international peace conference.

Carter, who brokered the 1978 Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt, said that President Assad was willing to negotiate on the status of the Golan Heights within the same framework.

The government-owned Al-Bayan daily in Dubai said Sunday Syria expressed willingness to demilitarise the Golan Heights if Israel agreed to withdraw its troops from the strategic area, which was occupied in the 1967 war and unilaterally annexed by the Jewish state in 1981. An agreement worked out under the aegis of the United Nations in 1974 provided for a demilitarised zone surrounded by zones of reduced forces on both sides.

Paying one's own way

FORMER U.S. President Jimmy Carter said Sunday that he was paying his way to Israel and the occupied territories because Israeli government offers of support with a condition that he would decide which Palestinians from the occupied territories he would meet.

The Israelis told him that "unless the Israeli government could choose which Palestinians I will meet with, they would not support my position. So, I sent word to the Israelis I prefer to pay my own way for the entire trip," Carter told a press conference in Amman.

In statements made in occupied Jerusalem after meeting Israeli President Chaim Herzog, Carter denied that he was carrying a message from Assad to Israeli leaders. Israeli Labour Party leader and sacked Vice-Premier Shimon Peres told the Israeli parliament last week that he had "received information that the Syrians are proposing peace negotiations, demilitarising the Golan Heights."

During an early morning press conference held in Amman before crossing the River Jordan to the West Bank, the former American president, who held talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Foreign Minister Marwan al-Qasbi and parliamentarians here, reaffirmed Jordan's key role in the Middle East peace process.

"There is no way to proceed in any substantive way toward peace without Jordan being deeply and intimately involved," Carter said.

He added that His Majesty King Hussein had "obviously expressed his support" for the "next step," which, according to the ex-president is an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue as proposed by Egypt and endorsed by Washington.

He said that although King Hussein chose not to endorse the Camp David accords, "he did later endorse the Reagan proposal of September 1982 which was exactly the same as the Camp David accords. So he will be involved, King Hussein will be

involved," Carter asserted. Carter also said that he felt that Syrian position on direct talks with Israel was "constructive" and said, "I wouldn't ask (Assad) to change it."

"Both in the last visit there, which was in 1987, and this one, President Assad authorised me to say publicly that he does support the peace process... and international peace conference, and under the umbrella of this conference, he is willing to have direct negotiations between Syria and Israel on all the outstanding issues, including the Golan Heights," he said.

In his statements issued in occupied Jerusalem later in the day, Carter elaborated further and said: "Once the international peace conference is convened, it would be rapidly adjourned and then President Assad authorised me to say that he would be very glad to have bilateral talks to resolve the differences between Syria and (Israel)."

In his Amman press conference, Carter stressed that he believed that the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel offered the "framework or guideline" for peace in the region.

He said that the U.S. proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue made

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House to resume debate on tax law

By Salameh Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday decided to resume discussions of a Finance Committee recommendation amending the Income Tax Law after Finance Minister Basal Jaradneh said the amendments would result in a JD 20 million loss to the treasury.

The House decided to postpone a vote on the committee's recommendation and resume discussions Thursday so as to allow Jaradneh to present a full report on the damage he said would result from passing the amendments.

According to the finance minister, who engaged in a tense argument with Finance Committee Chairman Abdullah Ensour, the amendments introduced would increase the budget deficit by JD 20 million.

"The amendments made by the committee only benefit high-income citizens instead of low income people and would result in increasing the budget deficit," Jaradneh said.

He warned that "if the House reduced revenues by JD 20 million, the government would be forced to increase custom fees that do not differentiate between low income and high income citizens. This would hurt low income people."

The minister, who complained that he was not given the chance to address the Finance Committee and make his point, said Jordan had one of the lowest income tax levels in the region. He explained that revenue from income tax constituted only 2.9 per cent of Jordan's gross national product compared with 4.5 per cent in Cyprus, seven per cent in Syria, 5.7 per cent in Egypt, 4.4 per cent in Tunisia.

Instead, he added, Jordan depends on custom fees to compensate, with revenues from customs reaching 52 per cent of total taxation compared with 24 per cent in Cyprus, 30 per cent in Egypt, 17 per cent in Greece, 13 per cent in Syria, 34 per cent in Tunisia and 22 per cent in Morocco.

He told the House that the committee's amendment, expanding exemptions from income tax, "will lead to a bigger deficit, and force measures by the government to increase revenues in a way that damages the national economy and harms people you are seeking to protect."

"I am the finance minister, and I was not given the chance to express my views to the committee when I asked the committee's chairman," Jaradneh said. "We must discuss alternatives in detail and allow for a better discussion before endorsing laws."

Ensour, who at first failed to acknowledge the need for resumption of discussions on the subject, said the committee met with officials from the Ministry of Finance in the course of its deliberations.

"I assumed that the ministry staff had informed the minister of our amendments," Ensour said. "I regret that this had happened."

Ensour said he did not believe there would be a JD 20 million increase in the budget deficit. Jaradneh responded promptly: "I am the finance minister and I say I am

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Labour unions deplore ministry policy, submit list of demands

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions Sunday voiced total dismay over the government's policy of allowing foreign workers to secure employment in the country and put forth a number of demands addressed to the Ministry of Labour to address the situation.

The demands and grievances of the federation were voiced by the federation chairman, Abdul Halim Khaddam, at a press conference he held in Amman.

Khaddam noted that if the ministry failed to take these demands seriously the federation would call for a general sit-in by all job-seekers and union members.

Khaddam said the unemployment problem "is the most serious issue the Jordanian people are facing at the moment at a crucial time of the country's history."

The Ministry of Labour has taken some measures designed to stem the unemployment problem in the country, but these are not sufficient to deal with the situation, he said.

"We received news about these measures with optimism only to be dismayed over the Ministry of Labour's retreat from its position under pressure and hegemony

from the wealthy businessmen who are only interested in safeguarding their own interests without any regard to public interest and the rest of the citizens."

The Ministry of Labour has now retreated from its declared plans to stem the employment of foreign workers, a move that can only continue to deprive nearly 150,000 Jordanians from any chance for work in view of the continued employment of foreigners, Khaddam added.

Khaddam pointed out that the ministry's earlier measures were not good enough to deal with the issue of unemployment because the ministry was taking these measures unilaterally without consulting with unions.

He also said that the government's policy of allowing imports of manufactured products to come to Jordan has denied many workers the right to find employment in local businesses and factories and the government's policy of allowing foreign contracting companies to work here bring in their equipment and technicians had also contributed to "this deplorable situation."

He said the government had been allowing businesses and factories to dismiss workers and to employ non-Jordanians for lesser

pay, thus contributing further to the aggravation of the situation. Khaddam presented the following demands:

— The ministry should strictly apply the law of allowing only Jordanians to take up jobs and to try to find work for job-seekers;

— The ministry should increase inspection visits to various businesses to ensure that they abide by the law;

— The ministry should set up a committee comprising workers as well as employers and the government to supervise the implementation of a sound employment policy;

— The ministry should enact a new labour law that can provide protection for workers against arbitrary dismissal;

— The ministry should provide sufficient protection for national industries against foreign competition;

— The ministry should fix a minimum wage for workers;

— The ministry should allow only very limited number of non-Jordanians to work in the country; and

— The ministry should not allow any other ministries to interfere in the affairs of workers.

Likud, Labour lock horns in tug-of-war for power

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir vied with sacked Vice-Premier Shimon Peres to form a new Israeli government Sunday after their coalition collapsed over proposed peace talks with Palestinians.

At separate meetings, Shamir's right-wing Likud and Peres' Labour asked President Chaim Herzog for authority to form a new government with each claiming it could command support from 61 of parliament's 120 members.

In the spreading political turmoil, Immigration Minister Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz quit the religious Shas party in protest at its bringing down Shamir Thursday in a successful no-confidence vote.

Likud bloc legislators rallied behind Shamir after quelling a party revolt and uniting behind him as Likud chairman.

Likud's backing for Shamir, decided at a meeting Saturday night, overrode complaints by party dissidents that his leadership would reduce chances of getting support from crucial religious factions in putting together a new coalition cabinet.

Longtime Likud rival Ariel Sharon swung support to Shamir, saying it was because the 74-year-old prime minister stuck with

party doctrine rather than try to save his cabinet in the no-confidence vote Thursday.

"At the last minute, with full awareness that he would lose his position and that the government would collapse, Shamir stood for our principles," Sharon told Israel radio. "We must support someone who would do that."

Peres, sacked by Shamir last week, led the no-confidence fight in parliament over Shamir's refusal to accept U.S. proposals for convening first-ever Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in Cairo.

"If we form a government very quickly, and I hope this will be the situation, we will be sitting very soon with the Palestinians in Cairo," Haim Ramon, the Labour parliamentary leader, said before meeting Herzog.

Lengthy negotiations are likely as both main parties woo four religious parties holding the key to power, including Shas. Formation of the unity government assembled 15 months ago took 52 days.

"It can take days and it won't surprise me if it takes weeks and not a few weeks," Ramon told reporters.

Labour politicians expected Herzog would give Peres the first crack at forming a government by the end of the week.

But Sarah Doron, Likud parliamentary leader, told reporters after meeting Herzog: "We recommended to the president that Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, continue as prime minister."

Likud still could be named since the party is parliament's largest faction with 40 seats in the 120-member body compared to 39 for Labour.

Officially Likud has dwindled to 35 seats in the legislature, since five liberal legislators won recognition as independents last week. But these have retained membership in Likud's governing bodies and would likely support the party in a new coalition.

By Israeli law, the president is not obligated to designate as premier a leader in the party with the largest number of seats although that has been the practice in the past.

If Peres wins the mandate, he may still be unable to pull small left-wing parties and religious parties into a governing coalition within a six-week time limit.

That would mean Shamir could then be asked to try to form a coalition with Likud's right-wing allies and the ultra-orthodox parties. Shamir remains caretaker prime minister until a new government is formed.

All hostages could be freed by January 1991, Iranian aide says

NICOSIA (AP) — A senior Iranian official said in an interview published Sunday the Western hostages in Lebanon could be freed within 10 months.

Ali Mohammad Besharati, first deputy foreign minister, told the Tehran Times newspaper. "I can say that all the hostages may be released by next January."

Besharati's statement in the latest in a series about the hostages from ranking officials and the government-run media in Tehran.

A moderate faction led by President Hashemi Rafsanjani says the hostage issue is moving toward a solution, while a radical faction argues against releasing them.

The 18 Western hostages are believed held by Shi'ite Muslim groups loyal to Iran, but thought to be more loyal to the radicals than the moderates. The hostages include eight Americans, four Britons, two West Germans, two Swiss, an Irishman and an Italian.

Besharati, who visited Lebanon recently, said he believes chances for a hostage release are better than ever.

"I saw the situation there," the newspaper quoted him as saying. "And you know nothing is secret in Lebanon. On the basis of my observations I can say the chances for freedom for the hostages are brighter than at any time before."

The official said he did not expect all the hostages to be released at one time.

He also said Iran has no direct link to the kidnappings. "The Islamic Republic of Iran, as it has been repeatedly said, is against the philosophy of hostage-taking and Tehran has no direct or indirect role in this matter," Besharati said.

"Many countries believe that we in Iran have spiritual influence in Lebanon," he said. "They also believe that we can use the spiritual influence for freedom of the hostages."

An advance copy of the interview with the English-language daily in Tehran was sent to the

Associated Press. The same paper in two recent editorials called for releasing the hostages as an Islamic and humanitarian action.

Besharati said Israeli attacks on Lebanon had twice prevented hostage releases — one was an unspecified attack on Muslim positions in South Lebanon two years ago and the second was the July 28, 1989, kidnapping of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid.

"I think if these two incidents had not taken place, by now the hostages would have reached their homes," the Foreign Ministry official said.

A spiritual leader of Hizbollah, or Party of God, Obeid was kidnapped from his home in South Lebanon and remains imprisoned in Israel. The United States, Britain and U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar all condemned the Israeli action.

Kidnappers holding U.S. Marine Col. William Higgins, taken hostage while serving with the United Nations in South Lebanon, said they hanged him in retaliation last July 31. No body was ever recovered.

Last week, kidnappers holding

three U.S. educators hostage threatened to kill them unless unspecified demands were met. The kidnappers also denounced statements by Iranian officials calling for the hostages' release on humanitarian grounds.

The radical faction in Tehran, eager to confront Rafsanjani, have encouraged the Lebanese groups to continue holding the hostages and said that Iran should stay out of the matter.

Rafsanjani has expressed support for releasing the hostages several times in the past, and the Tehran Times newspaper usually reflects his views.

The moderate faction has sought improved ties with the West to help finance Iran's reconstruction in the wake of 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. But the radicals consider ties with the West a betrayal of the ideals of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Friday was the fifth anniversary of U.S. hostage Terry Anderson's captivity. Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press, is the longest held Western hostage, although most others have been held at least three years.

Kuwaitis forecast return of parliament this year

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait officials said Sunday that elections bringing the return of parliament after a 3½-year suspension could be held this year.

For the first time since a coalition of 32 former deputies staged a series of rallies in December and January demanding that parliament be reconvened, officials are putting a timeframe to possible elections.

"A parliament is not very far away; a call for elections could be made later this year," a senior official told Reuters.

The big unanswered question now is what sort of parliament will return to the old National Assembly building, scene of unusually lively debates in the Gulf state.

Most of the activists want what they term a democratic parliament restored.

"A toothless parliament is not acceptable. The issue here is will the government respect the constitution?" said one activist.

But many Kuwaitis and former deputies agree that rowdy public debates in the past sowed division among the country's different tribes, ethnic groups and religious factions.

The Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah dissolved the parliament — 50 elected members, 15 appointed cabinet ministers and a prime minister — at the height of the Iran-Iraq war. The conflict had spilled over into the northern Gulf state with missiles hitting its ships and several bomb attacks in the capital.

Some of those seeking what they see as a democratic forum say they fear the government will try to change election laws, amend the constitution or impose restrictions to guarantee what one activist called the formation of "a tame parliament."

But Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah said last week he favoured an elected assembly "that not only acts as watchdog, but to which (the government) will be accountable as well."

Since late January, the crown prince has been meeting former deputies, tribal chiefs and prominent citizens to hear their views.

Former deputies said he had not yet put forward a formula for what the government calls "popular participation" in running the state.

"Parliamentary life will return but will it be like it was the old parliament? We have to consider the state's security, interests and the effects of a parliament and public debate on our neighbours and allies," one well-placed source said.

Western diplomats here also say they believe Kuwait is moving towards a more democratic system but is considering measures which could limit parliamentary powers.

"They will have elections and a parliament but under supervision. It will not be the same kind of democracy we know (in the West)," said one diplomat.

Sheikh Saad told a local daily an elected assembly could be formed but "according to (new) basis and regulations... (to ensure) the non-repetition of the experiences of 1976 and 1986" when parliaments were dissolved.

Najibullah moves to shore up shaky political position

KABUL (R) — Afghan President Najibullah Sunday was scrambling to shore up his political position badly shaken by the March 6 coup attempt in Kabul spearheaded by rebel air force pilots.

In a blunt televised address to Mujahideen field commanders this week, Najibullah tried to paint his implacable foe, hardline guerrilla leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, as their worst enemy.

He said coup leader Shahnawaz Tanai, his now sacked defence minister who was last seen by reporters in a cave hideout in Logar province about 50 kilometres south of the capital, had joined forces with Hekmatyar.

"Gulbuddin and his treacherous group intend to weaken our opposition grouping and make himself champion of the race," the official Bakhtar news agency quoted Najibullah as saying.

"With my Islamic and Afghan voice I say loudly, 'resist with all your might against them. Topple the national traitors and killer of your sons,'" he said in the appeal to guerrillas who are nominally allied with Hekmatyar in the Pakistan-based Afghan opposition.

Tanai has failed to win support from the other six guerrilla groups based in Pakistan.

Najibullah, attempting to exploit tribal and political differ-

ences plaguing the opposition Islamic rebels, said in his speech that men of Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami had attacked and killed other Mujahideen recently in six Afghan provinces.

The Mujahideen appear to have made significant gains in the battle for Khost, a small garrison town about 160 kilometres south-east of Kabul and commanding one of the roads leading to the Afghan capital.

Mujahideen forces captured the village of Tanai and two other security posts in Khost district which the guerrillas have been trying to seize for months, Bakhtar news agency reported at the weekend.

The village of Tanai is also the family home of the coup leader.

Government troops repulsed a heavy attack on Jalalabad this week, the news agency said. Mujahideen have been trying to take the city east of Kabul for over a year and make it the capital of their interim government.

The March 6 coup coincided with the first anniversary of the battle for Jalalabad, which launched the Mujahideen offensive to oust Najibullah following the Soviet troops withdrawal.

The Kabul Valley has reverberated to the firing of Soviet-made Scud missile and to warplanes heading east and south to the battlefields in Khost and Jalalabad over the past several

days. The government Saturday said trials would begin soon for those arrested in the "Shahnawaz-Gulbuddin coup plot". Diplomats in Kabul estimate about 100 people have been arrested so far.

Najibullah has promoted 52 officers to the rank of general since the coup in an effort to create a military leadership he can trust.

The government Saturday released an official report on loss of life and property in the outbreak, which said 95 people were killed and 172 were injured mostly in an aerial bombardment of the presidential palace and other parts of the capital by rebel warplanes and in exchanges of fire between rival tanks in the streets.

The report said 230 shops and 55 homes were destroyed and hundreds of other buildings damaged.

Diplomats said Najibullah may come under renewed pressure to step aside as a gesture of national reconciliation.

Some diplomats do not rule out the possibility that Moscow may end its support for Najibullah's government in a deal with the United States to end the 11-year-old Afghan civil war.

Najibullah, whose name means "noble man of God" took power in a Soviet-engineered move that forces his predecessor Babrak Karmal into exile.

Israel said balking at buying 'Patriot'

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States is trying to sell Israel a sophisticated anti-missile defence system, but the Israelis are not sure they want to buy.

The case reflects the impact that the reduced Soviet threat in Europe is having on thriving U.S. defence manufacturers.

Usually, Israel is the one pressing the United States to sell it weapons systems. This time, the Defence Department and the Raytheon Co. of Lexington, Massachusetts, are the ones doing the pressing.

Raytheon manufactures the Patriot, a land-based missile system originally designed to shoot down aircraft. Several years ago, Raytheon reconfigured the system so it also could shoot down

medium-range missiles.

The \$100-million Patriot package comes equipped with a radar to detect and track targets and a command centre to issue firing instructions to the missiles.

In an annual report of possible arms sales for fiscal year 1990, the State Department informed Congress, that Israel may buy the Patriot. Under-Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz discussed details of the sale on a visit to Israel in January.

Defence secretary Dick Cheney told young American Jewish leaders several days ago that discussions about the Patriot sale were under way.

But sources close to the deal say Israel is far from sold. "There's still a long way to go

toward a possible purchase — I say possible and not necessarily probable," said one source who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said a decision was not expected for several months.

In Israel last week, a military official said the Patriot "only gives limited solution to the missile problem, so we don't intend to buy it at this stage."

"We are looking at other systems," the official said, while declining to elaborate. Israel's dilemma is the cost versus the threat. For the \$200 million the United States is asking for two Patriot systems Israel would need, it could produce the next generation of an anti-missile missile, known as the Arrow.

The Arrow programme is a component of the strategic defence initiative, the space-based defence system being developed by the United States, which the U.S. Defence Department has farmed out to Israel for research.

The first phase of the Arrow project began in 1988 and is due for completion this year, ahead of schedule, U.S. officials say. The first test-firing is expected this July and another three by July 1991.

The second phase, which would prepare the missile for production, reportedly would cost about \$200 million. Israel would like the SDI programme to foot the bill for the second phase, but the Pentagon has not decided.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Mubarak begins African tour

CAIRO (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak, current chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), departed Sunday for Uganda, the first leg of an African tour which will also take him to Zambia and Namibia. Mubarak was accompanied by Butros Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs and Egypt's main Africa expert. The Egyptian president's first stop is a two-hour visit in the Ugandan capital Kampala for talks with President Yoweri Museveni. He later departs for the Zambian capital Lusaka where he will hold talks with President Kenneth Kaunda. On Monday, he will chair a meeting of the 50-member OAU's Southern Africa Committee which will discuss how to settle long-time wars in the region. On Tuesday, Mubarak will fly to Namibia to participate in the former South African colony's celebrations as a new nation.

200 Kurdish families return to Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP) — Bahaaddin Ahmad, speaker of the Kurdish Legislative Council in northern Iraq, says 200 Kurdish families have returned from Iran after an amnesty for Kurdish rebels was announced last week. The army's Hurras Al Watan weekly reported Sunday. It quoted him as saying that Kurdish guerrillas in Iran tried to prevent the families returning, but they fled during snowstorms in the mountainous region. Neither Ahmad nor the magazine said how many Kurds were among the families who reportedly returned. Kurdish guerrillas have been fighting for an independent homeland in northern Iraq for decades. During the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, they were supported by Tehran. There are an estimated 3.5 million Iraqi Kurds, around one-quarter of the population. Tens of thousands of them live in refugee camps in Iran and Turkey, often in poor conditions. They fled there during the Gulf war from Iraqi military offensives following the August 1988 ceasefire. Many more are political exiles in Europe. The amnesty was declared last week by President Saddam Hussein.

Chinese minister arrives in Bahrain

BAHRAIN (R) — Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister Qian Qichen arrived in Bahrain from Abu Dhabi Sunday on the third leg of a Gulf tour for talks with officials on regional issues and bilateral relations. The Gulf News Agency quoted Qian as saying on arrival the setting up of diplomatic relations last year "marked a new era in friendship and cooperation between the two countries." Bahrain and China established full diplomatic links in

April 1989, leaving Saudi Arabia as the only Arab nation without diplomatic ties with Peking. Qian has also visited Qatar.

Blind Moroccans fast for jobs

RABAT (R) — A hundred blind Moroccans are staging a hunger strike at a Rabat mosque, demanding the chance to learn and earn. They sat in the central courtyard of the Sid Al Ghandor Mosque Sunday holding placards listing 17 aims. One of them told Reuters the demonstration began Thursday and would continue until the authorities promised to examine their grievances. They want special facilities for the blind in the education system, school books in Braille and audio libraries. Blind people could be employed as telephone operators or physiotherapists and those with university degrees should be given jobs in the civil service, they say. A Rabat newspaper, L'Opinion, reported that 11 of the blind protesters were given hospital treatment Saturday and returned home after being discharged. No official figures are available for the number of blind in Morocco. Complete or partial blindness is often caused by trachoma, a disease prevalent in desert areas.

Scores die in Iran pipeline blast

NICOSIA (R) — A gas pipeline exploded in the Iranian capital, Tehran, Sunday killing or injuring scores of people and starting a massive fire, the Iranian News Agency (IRNA) said. The blast badly damaged at least 15 houses and destroyed 10 cars, the agency said. More than 90 minutes after the blast, firemen were struggling to control the blaze in Jamalzadeh Avenue, in the west of the capital, IRNA, monitored in Cyprus, reported.

Maghreb states sign free circulation pact

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania (AP) — Ministers from the five countries of the Maghreb Arab Union have agreed on a document providing for free movement of citizens among their North African nations. The document, signed at the end of the ministers' meeting Saturday night, will be presented to a conference of head of states in Algiers next July for final approval. The agreement also approved the creation of a unified identity card and coordination in the fields of security and national disasters. The identity card will serve as a Maghreb passport. Members of the Maghreb Arab Union are Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

| PROGRAMME ONE | PROGRAMME TWO |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 15:30 Koran | 18:00 Arsen Lupin |
| 15:45 Programme review | 19:00 News in French |
| 15:55 Children programmes | 19:15 Weekly Sport magazine |
| 16:00 News summary in Arabic | 19:25 News in Hebrew |
| 16:05 World News | 19:45 Varieties |
| 16:15 Local programme | 20:30 Empty Nest |
| 16:20 Programme review | 21:10 Tustala |
| 16:30 Arabic series | 22:20 News in English |
| 16:40 Programme review | 22:30 News summary in Arabic |
| 16:50 Local programmes | |
| 22:40 News summary in Arabic | |

PRAYER TIMES

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 06:30 Fajr | 17:00 Maghrib |
| 05:30 Sunrise/Duha | 17:05 'Isha |
| 11:40 Dhuhr | |
| 15:10 'Asr | |
| 17:00 Maghrib | |
| 19:05 'Isha | |

CHURCHES

| | |
|---|---|
| St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth Tel. 810740 | Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261 |
| Assembly of God Church, Tel. 637885 | Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751 |
| St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590 | Armenian International Church Tel. 685326 |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440 | Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295 |
| De la Salle Church Tel. 661757 | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 615817, 654932 |
| Terraviva Church Tel. 622566 | |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 635441 | |
| Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 638443 | |

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be fair and winds will be easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

AMMAN

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Min./max. temp. | 3 / 15 |
| Aqaba | 14 / 24 |
| Deirats | 1 / 16 |
| Jordan Valley | 9 / 23 |

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 15, Aqaba 24. Humidity readings: Amman 25 per cent, Aqaba 14 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

| NUMBERS | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| NIGHT DUTY | |
| AMMAN: | |
| Dr. Ahmad Al Dargi | 676473 |
| Dr. Mahmud Al Suaidi | 663087 |
| Dr. Rami Mizzi | 894788 |
| Dr. Issam Al Anbaki | 679666 |
| Firdos pharmacy | 661912 |
| Ferdous pharmacy | 778336 |
| Al Asana pharmacy | 637052 |
| Nairoba pharmacy | 637052 |
| Al Salam pharmacy | 636730 |
| Yacoub pharmacy | 644945 |
| Shmooni pharmacy | 637660 |

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| IRBID: | |
| Dr. Nabil Abul 'Ola | (—) |
| Al Shams pharmacy | 985238 |

ZARQA

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Dr. Youssef Abu Saad | (—) |
| Khalifah pharmacy | 985417 |

EMERGENCIES

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Civil Defence Department | 661111 |
| Civil Defence Immediate | 630341 |
| Rescue | 199 |
| Civil Defence Emergency | 621111, 637777 |
| Fire Brigade | 891228 |
| Blood Bank | 943002 |
| Highway Police | 775121 |
| Hotel Complaints | 605800 |
| Public Security Department | 630321 |
| Water and Sewerage | 661176 |
| Price Complaints | 661176 |
| Complaints | 897467 |
| Amman Municipality | 771111 |
| Complaints | 771111 |
| Telephone Information (directory assistance) | 121 |
| Overseas Calls | 010330 |
| Central Amman Telephone | 623101 |
| Repairs | 623101 |
| Abdali Telephone Repairs | 661101 |
| Jordan Television | 771111 |
| Radio Jordan | 774111 |
| Water Authority | 680100 |
| Jordan Electricity Authority | 815615 |
| Electric Power | |

COMPANY

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| RJ Flight Information | 636361 |
| Queen Aina Int'l. Airport | 68-33200 |

HOSPITALS

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| AMMAN: | |
| Hussein Medical Centre | 813813/32 |
| Khalifah Maternity, J. Amn. | 644216 |
| Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. | 642442 |
| Jabal Amman Maternity | 642362 |
| Malhas, J. Amman | 636140 |
| Palestine, Shamsani | 6641734 |
| Shamsani Hospital | 669131 |
| University Hospital | 667227/9 |
| Al-Musharraf Hospital | 6622450 |
| The Islamic, Abdali | 666127/37 |
| Al-Ahli, Abdali | 6641646 |
| Infanta, Al-Musharraf | 7711013 |
| Al-Basir, J. Amman | 7511126 |
| Army, Marja | 8916115 |
| Queen Aina Hospital | 6622450 |
| Amal Hospital | 674135 |
| ZARQA: | |
| Zarqa Govt. Hospital | (09)983322 |
| Zarqa National Hospital | (09)91071 |
| Ibn Sina Hospital | (09)98752 |
| IRBID: | |
| Princess Sumra Hospital | (02)775559 |
| Greek Catholic Hospital | (02)772275 |
| Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital | (02)347100 |
| Princess Hayat Hospital | (03)314111 |

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)33200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 09:00 Damascus (RJ) | 18:00 Dhahran, Kuwait (RJ) |
| 09:30 Samra (RJ) | 18:15 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ) |
| 09:45 Aqaba (RJ) | 18:15 Larnaca (RJ) |
| 09:50 Baghdad (RJ) | 17:15 Istanbul (RJ) |
| 09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ) | 18:10 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ) |
| 10:00 Dhahran, Kuwait (RJ) | 18:15 Cairo (RJ) |
| 10:15 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ) | 18:30 Bangkok (RJ) |
| 10:15 Larnaca (RJ) | |
| 17:15 Istanbul (RJ) | |
| 18:10 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ) | |
| 18:15 Cairo (RJ) | |
| 18:30 Bangkok (RJ) | |

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 09:10 Samra (LH) | |
|------------------|--|

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 11:30 Brunei, Montreal, New York (RJ) | 18:00 Tripoli (LH) |
| 11:45 Istanbul (RJ) | 18:05 Baghdad (AF) |
| 12:15 Frankfurt, Copenhagen (RJ) | 18:10 Paris (AF) |
| 12:45 Aqaba, Cairo (RJ) | |
| 12:50 Damascus (RJ) | |
| 13:00 Damascus (RJ) | |
| 13:40 Kuwait, Abu Dhabi (RJ) | |
| 13:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ) | |
| 14:10 Jeddah (RJ) | |
| 14:20 Cairo (RJ) | |
| 14:45 Dubai, Muscat (RJ) | |

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

| | |
|-------|-------------------------|
| 06:15 | London (BA) |
| 08:15 | Beirut (ME) |
| 10:10 | Frankfurt (LH) |
| 10:25 | Cairo (MS) |
| 11:00 | Baghdad (LA) |
| 13:45 | Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF) |
| 15:00 | Kuwait (KU) |
| 15:15 | Bucharest (RO) |

Authorities move to address problems of refugee camps

ZARQA (J.T.) — The government will undertake a long-term development programme to improve conditions for refugee camp residents in cooperation with several government departments and concerned institutions.

This was announced Sunday by Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs, at a meeting here following an extensive inspection tour of three Palestinian refugee camps in Zarqa governorate.

Qatanani and a number of officials and representatives of the camps drew up a plan which will be submitted to the concerned authorities.

The tour was prompted by last week's report by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, about the miserable conditions in the Sukhneh refugee camp. Camp residents complained about lack of basic services. Camp residents said they needed water and postal services, road networks and health centres as well as care for many handicapped children in the camp.

Qatanani said the government directly or indirectly is involved in providing services and assistance to 13 Palestinian refugee camps of which three are not recognised by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Sukhneh, Madaba and Hneikin camps are not recognised by UNRWA, according to government sources.

According to Qatanani, UNRWA offers services to one quarter of a million refugees in Jordan although those registered as refugees number nearly 916,000.

Accompanied by Zarqa Governor Mohammad Shobaki, Qatanani and other officials toured Sukhneh, Hneikin and Zarqa camps and heard demands by their residents about the need for roads, a cemetery, a youth club, vocational and community centres in addition to basic services like water, electricity and post offices.

"The government has provided land for the camps and is paying rent to the owners," Qatanani said. "The refugee camps are in bad need of reorganisation in



Makeshift shelters, muddy streets, and unhygienic environment are only part of the problems plaguing some of the refugee camps in Jordan, not to mention the lack of some of the basic services (Petra photo)

terms of streets and housing units, a project for which political decisions are required," he added.

Qatanani said that the refugee camps could not be transformed into permanent residence for the Palestinians, and can only serve as a shelter, otherwise the "refugee character" of the camps

will be removed, he said. The status of refugee camps has been decided upon by the Arab World as a whole and through a unified resolution, Qatanani added.

"Our department will embark on measures designed to improve conditions like asphalted roads, removing old posts and wires

which constitute danger to the residents and their homes," Qatanani said.

Qatanani called on the local residents to cooperate with the Water Authority which has expressed readiness to link each home with the sewerage system for a JD 60 fee to be paid in three instalments.

Regent urges closer cooperation between universities, community

IRBID (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday called for closer cooperation between the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) and Yarmouk University on the one hand and the local community on the other.

Prince Hassan, speaking during a meeting with the JUST board, stressed the need for achieving the maximum possible degree of interaction between the two universities and the Irbid Industrial Estate. He emphasised the need for striking a balance between expenditures or investment projects and revenues expected from them when drawing up regional and sectoral plans for investment projects.

The Crown Prince highlighted the importance of applied technical education, and called on the two universities to direct special attention to it.

Prince Hassan outlined the im-

portance of democratic dialogue among the youth and called on them to respect others' opinion.

The Prince recalled the achievements made by the modern Arab renaissance at both the national and pan-Arab levels, and noted in particular its role in fusing local and personal differences into "a well-defined melting pot capable of maintaining pluralism and diversity in our social fabric."

The Crown Prince noted that "pluralism and diversity do not conflict with national belonging and allegiance, but rather contribute to enhancing our national unity."

The JUST board members reassured Prince Hassan that the university seeks to maintain an organic link with the community and has therefore decided to undertake an evaluation of the university's four-year progress.

Earlier in the day, the Regent attended the graduation ceremony of a new batch of combat pilots and pilot trainers at a Royal Jordanian Air Force base. Upon arrival at the base Prince Hassan was received by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Beo Al Hussein, the base's commander and a number of senior officers.

At the end of the celebration, Prince Hassan presented certificates to all graduates, who included a number of trainees from other Arab countries, and awards to the excellent trainees.

Prince Hassan toured the base, and opened a gymnasium hall. He also took part in a tree-planting activity, which was organised to mark the establishment of the base. The celebration was attended by Prince Faisal, the minister of agriculture, the Mafraq governor, the commander of the Royal Jordanian Air Force and senior military and civil officials.

Police report series of drug busts, arrests

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday announced the interception and seizure of 1,089 kilograms of hashish, 737 grammes of heroin, 1,329 grammes of opium and 270 ceptagon pills.

The PSD's anti-narcotics department director, Brigadier Ghaleb Al Zoubi, said 72 persons, including two women, mostly of non-Jordanian nationalities were arrested. They were involved either in using the drugs themselves, carrying the drugs to others, smuggling the drugs across the border and the desert regions or hiding the stuff.

The seizures and arrests were made between November 1989 and March 10, and all those arrested have either received prison terms or awaiting trial, Zoubi reported.

In one of the cases, 272.5 kilograms of hashish were found loaded on donkeys and mules near Sabba within Mafraq Governorate but the traffickers fled when they were spotted by the security forces, Zoubi explained. He said three non-Jordanian nationals were seized in November trying to smuggle 31 kilograms of hashish destined for Jordan; and the authorities seized 203 grammes of hashish at the port of Aqaba but no arrests were made for lack of evidence.

Towards the end of November police arrested six non-Jordanians carrying 127 grammes of hashish, apparently for their own use, and on Dec. 3 for Jordanians were caught carrying 288 grammes of hashish, Zoubi revealed.

In January of this year, he said police were tipped about a cache of hashish near the desert region of Azraq and nearly 1,900 grammes of hashish were found hidden in a hole dug in that area.

On Dec. 21 Zoubi said 1,050

grammes of hashish were found with three persons on their way to deliver the drugs to a fourth — an escaped convict — in the south of the country and soon afterwards seven others were found carrying 100 grammes of hashish and they were all captured.

Zoubi said thanks to cooperation from Jordanian citizens, the Badia Police Force this month seized a car from a neighbouring Arab state carrying hashish. Zoubi also said that other drug trafficking cases were reported in Aqaba, Amman and Ramtha.

He said that at the border post of Ramtha ceptagon pills were found at the customs office, and a female traveller was found carrying 410 grammes of hashish hidden in one of her shoes; and 1,117 grammes hidden in the baggage of another male traveller. Another non-Jordanian woman captured in Amman was found to be carrying 530 grammes of heroin while border police found 159 kilograms of hashish with a group of smugglers who escaped to a neighbouring Arab country following an exchange of fire.

The PSD last year reported the death of an Egyptian upon arrival at Amman airport after swallowed plastic bags containing drugs burst in his stomach.

Drug traffickers and users normally get long prison terms and are heavily fined.

According to Zoubi, Jordan has no real drug addiction problem, but he said that traffickers tend to smuggle the stuff through Jordan to neighbouring Arab states. He said the quick capture of traffickers was largely due to modern methods and techniques followed by his department and close cooperation with Interpol and various police departments in other countries.

Private sector urged to assume leading role in tourism promotion

By Salameh Ne'matt

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdul Karim Kabariti said Sunday the private sector was more capable of coping with the supply and demand mechanism in the market than the government and said his ministry's role would be limited to encouraging and guiding private sector investments.

Addressing the first meeting of the recently-established Tourism Development Council, Kabariti said the private sector "has proven that it is more capable of management than the government and the ministry's policy is to facilitate the private sector's role."

He told the meeting that he did not believe the ministry should play a major role in initiating investments in tourism. Rather, "our goal is to encourage and guide investments by the private

sector within our capabilities."

The minister called on the Tourism Development Council, comprising hotel owners, travel agents and representatives of Royal Jordanian and the U.S. Agency for International Development, to express their own opinions on new investments and the expansion of existing ones.

Kabariti, who is also a deputy representing Ma'an, said that the devaluation of the dinar had created "an ideal environment for tourism in the country." However, he added, "the political climate could be described as rather unhealthy."

"We only hope that tourism does not become the victim of arguments and ignorance. We hope that tourism in Jordan has great elements for success,"

Kabariti, pointing out the need for a new approach for tourism promotion, said the ministry had an annual budget of JD 70,000 to

promote Jordan all over the world. "The ministry used to spread that amount in promotion all over the world in markets where we cannot compete. Now we want to concentrate on three or four markets such as Italy and France, for example, so that we can move to two or three other markets after we succeed in our initial plan," he said.

The Tourism Development Council, financed by Royal Jordanian, USAID and ministry sources, has an initial budget of \$50,000 and hopes to raise it to \$850,000 with possible contributions from Arab funds.

"We must work together towards realising tourism as the backbone of the economy," Kabariti remarked. "If we look at the figures on the balance of payments we find that tourism and remittances from Jordanian expatriates are the two major sources of revenue."

Ensur tours potash buyers

AMMAN (J.T.) — Managing Director of the Arab Potash Company (APC) Ali Ensour Sunday started a tour of several Asian nations which import Jordanian potash to discuss more potash sales.

Ensour said that the countries he was visiting annually import about 80 per cent of Jordan's total potash production. He said talks will cover the importers' needs of potash during 1990.

Ensour's tour came in the wake of an announcement here that APC has signed contracts with a major investment company to conduct detailed feasibility studies on expanding the company's production capacity.

"APC produced 1.25 million tonnes in 1989 and plans to produce 2.25 million on an annual basis starting 1996," according to Ensour. "The expansion is bound to boost Jordan's revenues in

hard currency which last year reached \$127 million," Ensour added.

He said that the Minerals and Metals Trading Company of India had recently signed a contract with APC to import 250,000 tonnes of potash which will be shipped over the coming five months to earn the country some \$25 million.

The deal with India, the major importer of APC products, was concluded during a visit to Delhi by a company team led by Sulaiman Huswari.

"India imports half a million tonnes of Jordanian potash annually, which earns the country \$50 million, Ensour said.

Jordan owns 54 per cent of the APC with the rest of the shares owned by the Arab Mining Company, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Development Bank.

Committee to prepare for Islamic academy

AMMAN (Petra) — The government Sunday announced the formation of a special committee to prepare for the establishment of an Islamic academy in Jordan which would be open to Jordanians and nationals from other Arab and Islamic countries.

The announcement said the 10-member committee, chaired by Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ali Al Faqir, will hold its first meeting Wednesday to lay down the foundation for the academy.

The committee will discuss financing, the location of the projected academy, the type of courses and the relationship between the academy and other Jordanian institutions concerned with Islamic studies, according to the announcement.

The committee groups Faqir, Dr. Nassereddin Al Assad, Kamel Sharif, Dr. Ishaq Al Farhan, Sheikh Izzeddin Al Muf-ti, Sheikh Noun Salman, Dr. Ibrahim Zeid Kilani, Dr. Abdul Salam Al Abbadi and Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Saleh.

Association to organise 'readathon' next month

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Association for the Education of Children (NAEC) will organise a "readathon" next month to encourage reading among children in Jordan.

According to Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) officials, all students from government, private schools and those run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the Armed Forces together with students from community colleges and universities in the Amman region will be welcome to take

part in the competition.

The NHF, which is responsible for the NAEC, said that the Arab reading competition was designed to encourage all citizens to read Arabic well, to promote reading especially among children and to highlight the NAEC's activities and programmes designed to benefit children. Each competition is required to have at least one sponsor who will pledge a certain amount of money for each book read by the competitor. The proceeds will benefit the NAEC's programmes and activities.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- Exhibition of plastic artists Arif Al Hamed and Ibrahim Al Nahshneh at the Housing Bank Complex.
- Art exhibition by seven Iraqi artists at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)
- Exhibition of watercolours by Jordanian artist Shaher Al Jarrai at Alfa Art Gallery.
- Art exhibition entitled "Spanish contemporary engravings" at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Art exhibition by Ahmad Nawash at the French Cultural Centre.

THEATRE

- Arabic puppet play entitled "Fables from my Grandmother's Chest" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 6:00 p.m.

FILMS

- The 1990 American film festival of fantasy and comedy features "Ghostbusters" at the Philadelphia Theatre — 8:00 p.m.

CONCERT

- Arab music concert by Al Nigham Al Arabi at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8:00 p.m.

BAZAAR

- Bazaar which includes photos and cartoons depicting the Palestinian intifada at the University of Jordan's Faculty of Nursing.

POETRY RECITAL

- Arab poetry read by Rashed Issa at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation — 6:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
جريدة أردنية عربية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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The 'rights' and the 'wrongs'

TWO "RIGHTS" are on a collision course over the situation in Lithuania: First and foremost is the right of Moscow to insist that none of its 15 republics break away from the union in a disorderly manner and without due process of law. There would be utter confusion and instability not only within the Soviet Union but also elsewhere in the world if parts of recognised countries secede unilaterally. In the case of Lithuania, the republic's parliament declared independence from the Soviet Union unilaterally last week and without following the Soviet constitutional steps to realise that big decision.

The second right is of course the right of the Lithuanians to exercise their well-enshrined and undisputed right to self-determination which no country or principle of domestic or international law can deny them. What adds credence to this right to self-determination for the Lithuanian people is the fact that Lithuania was an independent nation and internationally recognised as such ever since 1918 only to be arbitrarily lost that cherished status and join the Soviet Union in 1940 not through the exercise of the right to self-determination but rather as a consequence of the infamous non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. There is a cardinal principle in private and public laws that an action or decision which is based on a wrong is ipso facto wrong too. There is no claim even by Moscow that the Lithuanian people had freely and lawfully acquiesced to joining the Soviet Union during the reign of the notorious Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. What in essence transpired in 1940 was an agreement between two "tyrants" over the heads of their peoples and the least that one can say about that ignominious treaty is that it is null and void under international law.

There is but one way to redress the wrongs of the past and the wrong of the Lithuanian parliament to declare unilaterally its secession from Moscow, and that is, to conduct as early as possible a national referendum in Lithuania to measure the degree of support or lack of it to the independence declaration by the Lithuanian parliament. All the fatal shortcomings in the Lithuanian decision to break away from Moscow in a unilateral and arbitrary manner can therefore be rectified by holding a referendum under fair and free conditions.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

In an editorial Sunday, Al Ra'i daily discussed a meeting between former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Crown Prince Hassan the Regent who discussed the Middle East question and prospects for an international Middle East peace conference. The Prince urged Carter to do all he can in his mediation to bring about a settlement stressing the importance of the international conference to achieve an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab lands including Jerusalem. The Regent pointed out that continued Jewish immigration into Palestine is bound to aggravate the present situation and pose a real threat to the peace process. The question of improving conditions for the Palestinian people under Israeli rule were also discussed with Prince Hassan stressing that no improvement in living conditions could serve as a substitute for peace and a lasting solution, the paper noted. What the Prince stressed to Carter was Jordan's firm policy and continuous effort to achieve an exchange of land for peace, the paper noted. It said that the peace process does not tolerate further procrastinations and delays and cannot remain deadlocked because of Israel's practices. All peace-loving nations, said the paper, should realise the facts about the situation in the region but the United States ought to take the initiative in proving its good intentions and credibility by solving the conflict.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily criticises former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's statement on Saturday in which he stated that the Americans do not want to see the Palestinians as slaves. Tareq Messarweh notes that the Americans who have been providing Israel with all forms of military and economic aid are accessories to the crimes being committed by the Israelis in Palestine. The writer notes that the Israelis do not recognise the rights of the Palestinian people and refuse to recognise that the Palestinians are citizens of Palestine and are trying by all means to uproot them from their homes and lands. Since the Israelis are enslaving the Palestinians and stealing their property, and since the United States is a declared ally of Israel, providing it with all kinds of assistance to perpetuate its occupation of Palestine, then it is natural to conclude that the United States is an accessory to the crime of enslaving the Palestinian people. The writer notes that Carter displayed a great measure of optimism about a speedy end to the conflict in the Middle East but he says that there is no justification for such optimism in view of the situation in the area and Israel's inhuman practices in the occupied lands.

Following the downfall of the Israeli government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Zionists in the United States have embarked on a wide scale campaign against President Bush and his administration, said Al Dastour Sunday. The paper noted that Bush is being attacked for his criticism of Israel's settlement policy and for describing the absorption of Jews in Arab lands as a step that does not help the peace process.

Weekly Political Pulse

Parties to peace process need to keep momentum

By Waleed Sadi

MANY countries and parties have rushed to claim credit for precipitating the Israeli cabinet crisis and for bringing down Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir from power. In fact it was the recent U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East in general and Secretary of State James Baker's proposal for Palestinian-Israeli talks that have brought about the government crisis in Israel by bringing to a head the deep division not only within the Israeli cabinet but also within the entire country. Yet this American success could not have come about without the ongoing Palestinian intifada and the patient and conciliatory policies of the PLO. It will be remembered that the PLO under Chairman Yasser Arafat had gone more than half way to meet the demands of the community of nations in a bid to kick off peace talks in the Middle East. This Palestinian initiative has continued in spite of all the many temptations to forsake it in favour of a more aggressive and confrontational

policy in the occupied territories. This has enabled Washington to persist with its deepest involvement ever in the Middle East peace process which culminated in Baker's formula for peace talks. What remains to be done is to have the PLO persevere in its peaceful path by rejecting all calls for militancy. The chance of a lifetime to start collecting on this long-durated Palestinian investment in peace may have indeed arrived; it would be catastrophic if all the time and energy spent on it are allowed to be derailed by extremism of whatever nature or source.

This is not to suggest that the path of peace henceforth and in the wake of the fall of Shamir and his doctrinaire ideas will be strewn with roses. Rather it is a suggestion to persevere a little longer and explore the possibilities of peace in the new political era until the bitter end before turning sour and seeking other alternatives in which there

might not be any winners or losers. For even if the Israeli Labour Party assumes power under the leadership of Shimon Peres, there are no assurances yet that it has truly changed colour and opted for peace with the Palestinian people under the PLO's leadership. As a matter of fact the utterances of the leadership of the Labour constituencies, past and present, on the role of the PLO in the peace talks are notably as negative as those of the Likud with whom they professed deep division on the issue of war and peace in the Middle East. There is, nevertheless, always hope that behind the Labour rhetoric against PLO involvement in the projected Palestinian-Israeli talks, there remains a reservoir of common sense and realism which seeks to seize upon the rare opportunity offered by the PLO to strike a deal of a lifetime between the two sides. If this happens, then the leadership of Yasser Arafat and his policies would have

been vindicated. If not, then Arafat's gamble on peace would have to be declared bankrupt, null and void, for as long as one can gaze into the future. The final arbiters of the entire peace process will of course be the Israeli voters who will be soon asked once again to cast their votes not only to choose their representatives in the Knesset but also to choose between peace or war in this region. Surely, the Israeli people will be haunted with the prospect of yet another conflagration in the Middle East in which mass destructive weapons are anticipated to be deployed. The choice of war instead of peace in the Middle East will surely bring disaster to present and future generations of Arabs as well as Israelis. This cataclysmic probability will surely sober up the Israeli electorate to the truth that awaits them if they allow the chances of peace in the region to slip away. Still, over and above the call on the Palestinians to perse-

vere and the Israelis to exercise wise judgment when they vote next time around, Washington is also called upon to persevere as well with a view to completing what it has started to do in the first place. Any American wavering or weakening of resolve would have immeasurable negative effects on the entire peace process which is still hanging by a thread. Above all, if U.S. financial or military aid must continue to pour into Israel, come rain or sunshine, the least that the Arab side would hope for is to have such impulsive aid organically linked not only with the beginning of peace talks in the Middle East but also to the success of these talks. It is one thing to start negotiations between Israel and the Arabs and quite another to have the talks come to fruition. And as long as Israel's self-confidence, economically and militarily, gets always fortified to the extent that leaves the Jewish state with no real incentive to bar-

gain in good faith with the Arab side, then Washington is dutybound to suspend such aid programmes till the peace process truly sees the light of day and begin to bear fruit. President George Bush's administration has already manifested deep recognition of the fact that the peace process that it is fathering is very fragile and requires all the delicate attention and care that it can muster. If the U.S. prescription for peace in the Middle East fails, it will be in no small part due to lack of U.S. resolve to see it through not only in form but in substance as well. In a nutshell, when and only when these three basic ingredients, i.e. Palestinian perseverance, Israeli choice of peace over war and U.S. perseverance with its peace initiative converge in a harmonious and well-coordinated framework there will be a real chance of peace between Israel and the Arabs.

Why Palestinians lose out in the U.S.

By Alfred M. Lihenthal

FORTY TWO years after the creation of the state of Israel and the onset of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, no settlement is yet in sight. Neither the turmoil and bloodshed in the West Bank and Gaza nor the devastation of Lebanon has moved the American government to use Israel's dependency (to the tune of an annual \$3.5 billion subsidy) to press its government to be more forthcoming. Arafat's acceptance at Algiers and Geneva of U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 and the renunciation of terrorism have only been met by Shamir's elections proposal and the Mubarak and Baker amendments, none of which accept the sine qua non to peace, the right of the Palestinians to establish a state in their own homeland.

The power of the Israeli lobby

What remains totally unaltered and decisive is the never-faltering power in the United States of the Zionists and the pro-Israeli forces. The lobby and its adjuncts are even more effective today than when they influenced President Truman in 1947 to push for the creation of Israel at the United Nations and then to recognise this state seven minutes after it came into being. Such action, it must be remembered, was taken over the opposition of Secretary of State George Marshall, Secretary of Defence James Forrestal, and Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

Despite the invasion of Lebanon, the Sabra-Shatila massacres, the Iran-contra scandal, the Pollard affair and the intifada, the plethora of Arab-American groups supporting the goals of the Palestine Liberation Organisation have made scarcely a dent in Zionist power and have failed to advance their cause in a practical, political sense. True, Israel's stock has greatly declined since the television coverage of the intifada began to expose the brutal treatment of Palestinians, but public opinion has not moved in favour of the Palestinians, nor have inroads been made in the White House and in Congress, which count most.

The PLO still conjures up the terrorist image. And Palestinian factionalism causes many Americans to react: "The Palestinians are killing one another, so why should we concern ourselves about their fate?" And the inter-ethnic rivalry among Arab-American groups here only reinforces this image of disunity. The media has been enabled to play upon the execution of some 140 Palestinian alleged collaborators and the killing of 40 Israelis to smother the slaying by the Israeli military or settlers of over 750 Palestinian civilian.

Mubarak on a tightrope

Mubarak's Egypt is totally dependent on America's \$1.5 billion subsidy which Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the ensuing Camp David Accords earned for his country. The Egyptian president is forced to walk a tightrope between a friendship with the Palestinian leadership, whose cause he would like to advance, and his dependency on the U.S. Egypt's foreign minister, Ismat Abdal Maguid, conveniently absented himself from the Arab League meeting in Tunis in De-

cember to avoid joining in expressions of support for direct PLO participation in the proposed Israeli-Palestinian talks and criticism of the negative, obstinate stance of the Israeli government. Egypt's participation in such an Arab statement would not only strain relations between Egypt and Israel, but might even be viewed by Likud as a violation of the spirit of Camp David. In effect, Egypt dares not bite the hand that feeds it. Money still talks on the Middle East political scene, whether domestically or internationally. When the United Nations considered a resolution to upgrade the PLO's present status as an organisation to that of an observer state, the United States warned that if it was passed it would retaliate by withholding its 25 per cent share of the U.N.'s annual \$850m budget, a move that would bankrupt the organisation.

Focus on anti-Semitism

Whenever and wherever the state of Israel encounters obstacles in its hitherto successful moves to exclude the PLO, the media have proved willing to help rescue the Zionist entity by focusing attention on the Holocaust or some past anti-Semitic incident. This has been particularly true of The Washington Post and even more so of the influential New York Times, where scarcely a day passes without the appearance of some prominent reference to bigotry, past or present, against Jews.

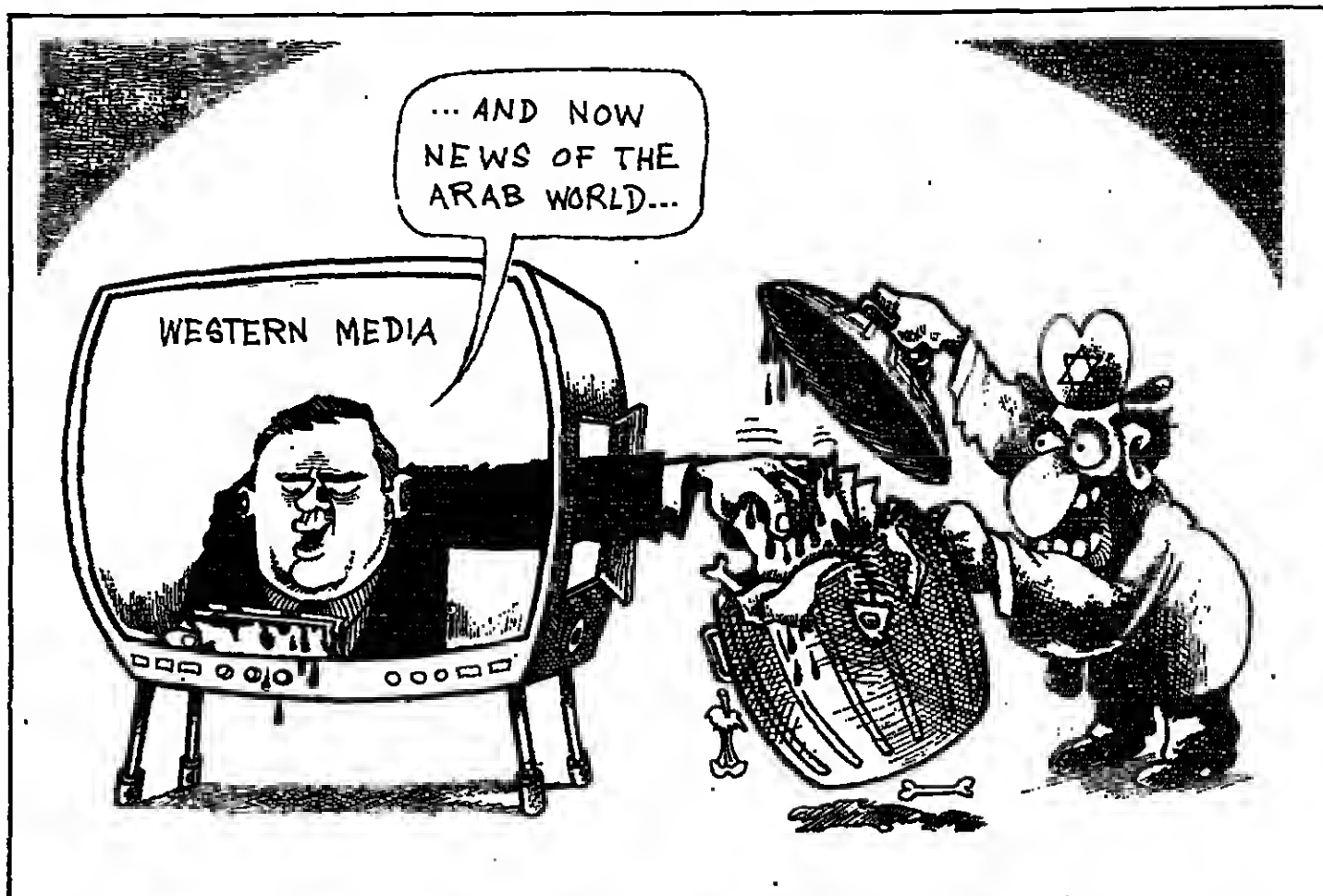
The Palestinians do not seem to comprehend how the Holocaust and anti-Semitism are by far the most effective weapons in the Zionist bag of tricks. Apparently they do not understand that it is not Palestinian rights or wrongs versus Israeli rights or wrongs that govern public attitudes and governmental action towards the Middle East, but Judeo-Christian relations.

Nothing has produced more myth-information and favourable propaganda for Israel than the emphasis placed on the Holocaust. This, of course, helps divert attention from the revelations which increasingly tarnish the Israeli image. The latest were the exposure of an Israeli, Mike Harari, as the chief political adviser to Panama's General Noriega, and the likelihood that Nicolae Ceausescu was paid, according to the Israeli paper Yediot Aharonot, \$5,000-\$7,500 for every exit visa issued to Romanian Jews. Up to \$60m, raised by various Jewish organisations over the past 20 years, is said to have ended up in the dictator's pocket.

The importance of public relations

The year of 1989, which started with no much promise for a Middle East settlement, ended with the Palestinians in the occupied territories sunk in gloom. In the course of the intifada, they have sacrificed so much, and the PLO-U.S. talks have yielded so little. Yet the United States can now more easily exert the necessary pressure on Israel. The momentous changes in Eastern Europe have diminished the validity of the Zionist contention that the U.S. needs Israeli military might in the Middle East as a buffer to threats of Communist expansionism.

In December, Khalid Al Has-



san, one of Yasser Arafat's most trusted advisers, was dispatched to Washington for talks and study. As a result, perhaps past Palestinian disdain for the art of public relations and imagery will be reappraised by the PLO leadership in Tunis, with a better understanding of why its cause is making so little progress where it counts most.

In truth, the PLO cannot

escape from coming to grips with the overpowering, ever pervading exploitation of the Holocaust. It behoves them, through a deftly planned educational programme or some similar stratagem, to prove to Americans that their animosity is directed not against Jews with whom they had lived peacefully for millennia, but against Zionists who seek to totally dominate them. To insist

that Judaism is not Zionism, that Zionism is not Judaism, and to be anti-Zionist is not to be anti-Semitic, is not nitpicking, but is of the essence. Without acceptance of this dogma, there is little hope that a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine co-existing together, will ever be realised.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser,

wrote in the New York Times about changes in Eastern Europe: "Freedom of choice is the foundation of the new order." Do not the Palestinians deserve to be part of this newly emancipated world? And who can say they will not if only they can overcome their seemingly congenital incapacity for collaboration? — Middle East International, London.

Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



On 'Contemporary Art in the Islamic World'

By Nicola A. Ziadeh

HISTORIANS of Islamic arts (and architecture) have been at loss to identify the most suitable way of dealing with the subject. The various branches of artistic expression which appeared and developed over such a long period and in an area as vast as any civilisation has covered, and more importantly are still being produced, certainly present difficulties. Could an art historian treat the whole thing as one unit? The answer is, mostly, "No." Should the subject be divided according to countries? Or to periods? No satisfactory answer is possible.

All methods, by the way, have been tried. Besides, some art historians seek, or even see, a unity in Islamic art (or arts) which guides them, or forces them, to deal with their topics almost spiritually or something like that.

And let me hasten to say that there will be numerous attempts to solve this (or these) problem(s); and there may be no solution. As it is I am not really worried. This just means that more books on history of arts would be produced, and more variety of views and ideas will be available in the market. These ideas crossed my mind as I started leafing the pages of "Contemporary Art in the Islamic World," by Princess Wijdan Ali. It is true this recent work deals only with contemporary art and art pure and simple at that; but what about the roots?

Now let us get the book at hand. Princess Wijdan is referred to (by herself) as editor, but she has contributed six chapters out of the 19 chapters of the book, which has XII + 276 pages.

In his brief forward to the book, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan says:

"This book focuses on bringing together the cultural differences between the Islamic and Western traditions, which in my opinion, would develop a pre-eminent understanding and consequently improve relationships among the people and countries of these two civilisations."

The arts treated in the book include painting on canvas, sculptures, graphics and ceramics. And the various authors who contributed the material are well-known authorities and have written with knowledge and warmth; I always feel that writing about art must have some passion, because the "pieces" themselves are produced under compassionate circumstances.

It is hardly possible to give such a book its due in a daily newspaper — it must have (and probably already has had) a fuller treatment and from the pen of an art historian with an "eye," not just an historian whose

Dr. Nicola Abdo Ziadeh, 82, is a retired professor who has taught at the American University of Beirut, Harvard University, the University of Jordan and the Lebanese University. He has written numerous books on Arab and Islamic history and civilisation, and has prepared about 1,400 radio scripts, both in English and Arabic. In today's Jordan Times, Dr. Ziadeh resumes a series of articles after a two-year break.



Dr. Nicola A. Ziadeh

only artistic training is appreciation — and this through museums and books.

Here the reader finds in each chapter a brief account of the more recent development of art in the country concerned, with variations depending on certain activities, such as galleries and institutes (Jordan) etc. This is followed by brief biographical notes on artists of the country, with — and here lies the real beauty

and benefit of the volume under discussion — ample illustrations both coloured and black and white.

This is a magnificent volume — rich, informative, instructive and gently attending to — no doubt by Princess Wijdan.

Contemporary Art in the Islamic World, Princess Wijdan Ali, Scorpion Publishing Limited, London, 1989.

School dropout turns novelist

By Paul Ben-Itzak
Reuter

SAN FRANCISCO — For Holly Uyemoto, author of a well-reviewed new novel called *Rebel Without a Clue*, the path to literary success began when she dropped out of school.

"I was told by teachers and peers alike that I was not very intelligent," recalls Uyemoto, 20, whose book centres on the lives of teenagers, one of whom has AIDS, in a wealthy area of California.

"What really tore it," she said, was discovering that her name was on a list of students destined for a high school that had a student body largely comprised of delinquents.

Aged 15, she quit school altogether, which she admits did not please her parents.

"They were homicidal at first," Uyemoto said in a recent interview, dressed entirely in black and wearing a large butterfly-shaped ring.

"They just wanted me to toil away at the salt mines of education and bungle along like the rest of the 'megadotards' until I got

my degree," she said, using a word of derision that she apparently coined herself.

After leaving school Uyemoto toiled away instead on a novel, finishing a rough draft in just three weeks. She sold it to the third literary agent she approached.

The book was released in November by Crown Books to mostly positive reviews.

"Uyemoto...delves into the flashy, sometimes fatal, world of easy money, sex and drugs, and emerges with a terrific book," a *New York Times* reviewer wrote of the book.

The novel is set in California's affluent Marin County, north of San Francisco.

It is there that Thomas Bainbridge, the world's most successful male model, returns to tell his best friend, Christian Delon, that he has contracted AIDS.

Christian, a recent high school graduate, narrates the tale.

Reviewers and Uyemoto's editor praise her ability to capture the way people really talk.

"Her words on the page sound as if they came out of a human mouth," said Lisa Healy, editor

at Crown.

Healy was also impressed by a first novel that is not autobiographical and one in which a female author writes from a male perspective.

"You very seldom see someone make such an imaginative leap in voice, particularly in the first person," Healy said.

Uyemoto is more modest.

"I see myself as hanging by knees from the bottom rung of the ladder of literary credibility, swinging back and forth," the author said during an interview, frequently pausing to find the right phrase or suddenly bursting into laughter.

Uyemoto says she is nothing like her characters, who take drugs as easily as some people take vitamins. She claims that in person she is just the opposite.

"I'm embarrassed to be me," she said.

"I say things in my writing that I never get to say while I'm in the car with the guy who's telling me that I'm just a soulless pod, and then he pushes me out and tries to back over me unsuccessfully with his car...metaphorically speaking," she said.

Medical Aid for Palestinians comes to Jordan

By Sana Atiyeh

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The London-based charity organisation Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), which provides medical help to Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories and to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, will establish a chapter in Jordan soon, according to the MAP representative in the Kingdom, Nadia Alami.

Alami told the Jordan Times that the MAP chapter in Jordan, whose honorary chairman will be His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, is the fifth outside its London headquarters. It is now in the final stages of its registration as a charity organisation in the Kingdom, she said.

"The Jordan chapter, whose executive chairman is Abdul Majid Shoman, chairman of the Arab Bank, will be one of the most important for MAP because Jordan is the first stop for many of the wounded in the Palestinian uprising, some of whom we plan to treat," Alami said.

MAP's fund-raising activities are expected to be held soon after the final registration of Jordan's chapter. Three days of activities are scheduled to take place in Amman in May, with the participation of international celebrities, such as pro-Palestinian British actress Vanessa Redgrave.

Also participating is Dr. Swee Chai Ang, one of the founders of MAP and author of "From Beirut to Jerusalem" — memoirs of her experience with Palestinian refugees during the Sabra and Shatila mas-

saques in 1982 and the years that followed.

No major MAP activities have taken place in Jordan, but two fundraising dinners were held in Amman in 1988 and 1989 and a hospitalisation scheme was funded for poor patients from the Baqaa refugee camp, co-financed by the committee of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

MAP was established as a charity organisation after the Sabra and Shatila massacres under the slogan of "for the relief of poverty and sickness and the advancement of education amongst refugees and other displaced persons and in particular, those refugees displaced from Palestine," Alami explained.

Cooperating with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children, Oxfam, NORWAC and other international non-government organisations, MAP — which describes itself as a non-political humanitarian organisation — concentrates on helping civilian victims of war and works closely with the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). The organisation also treats non-Palestinian patients. "In Lebanon we treated many non-Palestinians, especially children with special needs," Alami said.

She said MAP had received international recognition, and was well-known for the efforts of the staff and volunteers touring the world and arousing humanitarian interest on Palestinian victims whether in refugee camps in Lebanon or



A mother watches over a young intifada victim in a makeshift hospital. The intifada means many such cases are treated by MAP staff.

in the occupied lands.

"Hundreds of newspapers, radio and television interviews were conducted with well-known MAP volunteers, Drs. Swee Ang and Pauline Cutting, both of whom have written books about Palestinian suffering in Lebanon, and addressed thousands of meetings and conferences worldwide. Pauline (author of "Children of the Siege" about the Palestinian camps siege in Beirut in 1985, and Suzie Wighton, a MAP nurse, both have received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and Member of the British Empire

(MBE) from Queen Elizabeth II," Alami noted.

She added that MAP had received recognition from the British government, including the Conservative and Labour parties, the Liberal Democrat and Social Democratic parties, as well as trade unions, professional organisations and religious foundations.

"With the intifada going on, Palestinians inside the occupied territories need our utmost medical help, especially in light of the poor availability of medical and health facilities there," Alami said.

MAP has 22 projects in the

occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, providing hospitalisation schemes, specialised volunteer doctors, surgeons, physiotherapists and nurses, laboratory equipment and other medical equipment, she said. The organisation, working with Palestinian staff and training them, provides professional and material assistance through hospitals, health centres and the popular health committees.

Although MAP is presently preoccupied with the occupied territories, Alami said, there are also several projects for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Apple Computer expo '90

| Tuesday, March 20 1990 | Language |
|------------------------|---|
| 11:00 AM | Apple Preview System 7.0 E A sneak preview of the next major release for the Macintosh operating system. |
| 4:00 PM | Bilingual Productivity Tools A A closer look at how the Macintosh enhances work environments using spreadsheets and other tools. |
| 6:00 PM | Oracle for Macintosh E The latest in connectivity between Macintosh and other computers. |

Seminar schedule

| Wednesday, March 21 1990 | Language |
|--------------------------|---|
| 11:00 AM | Communication E The networking power of a Macintosh with any Macintosh, PC and mini computers. |
| 4:00 PM | Total Publishing Solution A Taking a publication from A to Z, while showing the available tools. |
| 6:00 PM | Multimedia E Presenting information through colour, graphics, sound and animation. |

| Thursday, March 22 1990 | Language |
|-------------------------|--|
| 11:00 AM | Macintosh in Higher Education A How different facilities in universities are applying Macintosh technologies. |
| 4:00 PM | Macintosh Arabization A Why Macintosh Arabization today and in the future. |
| 6:00 PM | Graphics E Professional tools for graphic designers, publisher and others on the Macintosh. |

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House

(Continued from page 1)

positive that it will reduce revenues by JD 20 million. If you and the committee can convince me otherwise, I am willing to listen."

When near the end of the discussion Ensour declared that "this is a waste of time and there is no need to reconsider the committee's amendments," Jaradneh tried to leave the floor, but was stopped by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Sheikh Abdul Baqi Gannamoh and Information Minister Ibrahim Izzadeh.

House Speaker Suleiman Arar swiftly intervened with a proposal to resume discussions Thursday after hearing a full report by the finance minister. The proposal was endorsed with a majority show of hands.

Carter

(Continued from page 1)

by Secretary of State James Baker last year was "compatible with the Camp David accord."

The Baker proposal calls for a meeting of the foreign ministers of Israel, Egypt and the U.S. to pave the ground for the proposed dialogue, which will focus on Israel's plans to hold elections in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In reply to a question, Carter said his understanding was that the Palestine Liberation Organisation "has indeed approved this process. And I would guess that the delegation that will be chosen to represent the Palestinian community in the West Bank and Gaza will be well understood by the PLO leadership."

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Britain plans big security operation for World Cup

LONDON (AP) — The British government has ordered its biggest security operation for a sports event to try to prevent footballism by its soccer fans at the World Cup, it was reported Sunday.

The Sunday Telegraph quoted unidentified government sources as saying the programme would include use of British police as spotters to try to identify known soccer thugs for their Italian counterparts.

The cup, soccer's world championship, opens in 12 Italian cities June 8.

The paper also said that authorities were concerned that trouble could erupt in Genoa, where ferries depart from the Italian mainland for Sardinia, the island where the English team will be based.

The Telegraph said that, in addition, towns in France and Italy have been warned to be prepared for trouble by British fans travelling by car to Italy for the World Cup.

"This is the biggest operation the government has ever mounted for a sporting event," the newspaper quoted one source as saying. "This effort is being made to save our reputation but, in spite of all this work, we have to prepare for trouble."

Last week, top British police officials said they had uncovered plans for battles at the World Cup between hooligans from England and the Netherlands.

The two teams, whose followers are among the most violent in Europe, play in the same first-round group on Sardinia and Sicily.

Another British newspaper, the Sunday Times, reported that hooligans from around the country were plotting violence at an exhibition match between England and Tunisia in Tunis June 2, and outside the stadium in the Sardinia capital of Cagliari June 16, when England and the Netherlands play.

It quoted Sean Gibbs, identified as a known hooligan from Cheltenham, England, as saying he was looking forward to "serious violence" at the cup.

Capriati, Becker score more wins

KEY BISCAIYNE (R) — American teenager Jennifer Capriati upset sixth-seeded Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia for the second consecutive week to advance to the third round of the \$2.55 million International Players Tennis Championships Saturday.

Second-seeded Zina Garrison of the United States was upset by Julie Halard of France and men's second seed Boris Becker of West Germany struggled before defeating qualifier Fabrice Santoro of France in this second-round match of the 96-player tournament.

Top-seeds and defending champions Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia and Gabriela Sabatini were both winners. Lendl struggled but defeated Jens Woermann of West Germany 6-3(3-7). Sabatini had fewer problems beating Sandra Wasserman of Belgium 6-3.

Fifth-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain outlasted South African Dinky Van Rensburg in a three hour and five minute marathon played almost entirely from the baseline.

Sixth-seeded Aaron Krickstein was upset by Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland while eighth-seeded Tim Mayotte fell easily to Soviet Alexander Volkov in other second round matches.

Capriati, who reached the finals of her first professional tournament in Boca Raton, Florida, last week by beating Sukova, said that she was

more confident and more cautious this week for that very reason.

"Today, I knew what to expect, but she also knew how to play me this time so I knew I had to play better. I think I played very well today. I wasn't really expecting to win either time, but I'm really happy I did," Capriati said.

Capriati took advantage of very erratic tennis from Sukova as well as nine double-faults, including three in one game, from Sukova's normally reliable serve.

Sukova pounded her heavy topspin groundstrokes and opened the match with a 2-0 lead before Capriati's groundstrokes caught fire and bewildered Sukova by repeatedly hitting the lines.

Sukova was bewildered by her play and had no explanation for her performance against the teenager.

"I didn't expect to play this badly, I felt I knew what to do, but when you can't hit the ball in the court, that doesn't mean anything," Sukova said.

Garrison, fourth in the world, played two loose forehands and dropped her serve at 4-4 in the final set against Halard, who kept Garrison away from the net most of the match.

Halard held her serve in the 10th game to close out the match by waiting for Garrison to force the point and make an error, as she did the entire match.



Boris Becker

Schneider wins slalom and the finale season title

ARE, Sweden (AP) — Vreni Schneider of Switzerland captured the women's season slalom title Sunday by winning the last race on the World Cup tour.

Schneider was only 11th after the first run, then capitalised on mishaps in the second run by two of her main rivals.

Claudia Strobl of Austria, who held an eight-point edge ahead of Schneider going into the finale, fell less than seven seconds into the second run and was disqualified.

Strobl was fastest in the opening run, .70 ahead of teammate Petra Kronberger, the overall champion, who also was disqualified in the second run after a gate miss.

Schneider, a double Olympic winner in the 1988 winter games in Calgary and the World Cup overall champion last season, had

a combined time of one minute, 10.20 seconds.

Patricia Chauvet of France was a surprise runnerup, .50 behind Schneider, for her best slalom finish of the season.

World Cup Rookie Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden placed third, .67 behind.

Schneider topped the final slalom standings with 125 points while Strobl had 108.

It was the fifth slalom victory of the season for Schneider. But she came into the race after two straight failures, having been eliminated by gate misses recently at Stranda, Norway, and Vemdalen, Sweden.

Arsenal defeat sweet revenge for ex-manager

LONDON (R) — Nearly 14 years ago, Bobby Campbell quit his job as Arsenal coach after failing to land the coveted manager's job in succession to Bertie Mee.

On Saturday, he returned to Highbury for the first time as a manager and walked away a very happy man indeed.

Not only did his team Chelsea do what no other side have done this season, they effectively shattered the English league soccer champions' fading hopes of retaining the title.

The 1-0 win dealt Arsenal their first home defeat of the season and gave midfielder John Barnes a goal to celebrate on his 300th appearance for the west London club.

"I am highly delighted with this win but I'd better not say too much about why," said a jubilant Campbell.

Arsenal remains in third place in the league, just one point in front of Chelsea who have played one game more.

Liverpool, who were at Manchester United Sunday, are five points behind Villa but have one match in hand.

Arsenal manager George Graham, whose team conceded the 64th-minute goal against the run of play, was clearly shaken.

"I never think about the title. I didn't last year when we won it but if you can't win it you have to keep playing for your professional pride and finish as high as possible," he said.

"There could still be possibly Europe to aim for and you have to give your fans value for money. But this result summed up our season — we were very inconsistent."

The fans, who jeered Graham's decision to bring off striker Kevin Campbell late in the game, were clearly unhappy.

Tottenham Hotspur, Arsenal's north London neighbours, were also nursing wounds inflicted by west Londoners, going down 3-1 at Queen's Park Rangers who

could have scored more.

Norwich drew 1-1 with relegation-threatened Millwall but the match turned bad in the 61st minute when Norwich's Robert Fleck and Millwall's Steve Wood were sent off for fighting.

For several disgruntled strikers, Saturday proved a time to remind their managers just what they could do.

Transfer-listed Tooy Cottage scored a brace as Everton beat Crystal Palace 4-0 while Manchester City's one-time England international Clive Allen returned to the first team after two months out and hit a penalty in their 1-1 draw at Luton.

Villa's Ian Ormondroyd, dropped to the substitutes' bench to make way for oen \$2.4 million signing Tooy Cascarino, scored his team's winner at Derby.

Brought on for the second half, the lanky Ormondroyd broke the ice in the 71st minute to give Villa a crucial 1-0 win.

New York Yankees owner is blackmailed by gambler

NEW YORK (AP) — New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner is being blackmailed by an unemployed gambler who was involved in his legal battle with outfielder Dave Winfield and to whom he paid \$40,000, according to the New York daily news.

In Sunday's editions, the news said Steinbrenner admitted paying the money Jan. 8 to Howard Spira. Spira gave Steinbrenner information to use in his suit against Winfield, but Steinbrenner said that was not the reason for the payoff.

The paper said Spira signed an agreement promising never to disclose the payoff but has threatened to make it public, along with their tape-recorded conversations, unless Steinbrenner gives him an additional \$110,000 and a job at his American Shipbuilding Co. in Tampa, Florida.

Steinbrenner, in turn, has accused Spira of "extortion in its purest form" and Spira is under investigation by the FBI, which

raided the Bronx, New York, apartment where he lives and seized tapes, legal documents and other records.

"If it was stupidity on my part, then it was," the oen's quoted Steinbrenner as saying in an interview Saturday. "But I honest to God felt that I could help this young man to get his life straight."

The daily news said it listened to the tapes and quoted Steinbrenner as telling Spira in a March 2 phone call:

"I offered you some money. You said, 'no, George, just give me this much more, just give me a little more, give me 40.'" All right, I went against everybody's advice, I gave you the 40 to try and help you and they said, they told me: 'sure as hell, he'll be back trying to get more out of you.' And damned if you didn't. And then they come in and they tell me, hey, he's saying he's

going to take the tapes and he's going to the papers, and he's gonna do this and he's gonna do that. I said, 'he can't do that. I gave him money to help him. And I'm not going to give him any more.'

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NORTH
♠ 8 2
♥ 5 3
♦ 9 6 2
♣ J 8 5 3

EAST
♠ Void
♥ Q J 10 9 4 2
♦ Q J 8 7 4
♣ Q 9 4 2

SOUTH
♠ A K Q J 10 3
♥ A K 6 3
♦ A
♣ A K

The bidding:
South West North East
2 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass
3 ♥ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass Pass

Opening lead: Seven of ♠

Even what seems like the simplest of contracts could require careful handling. South was so upset at not getting to a grand slam on this hand that he forgot to make sure of the small slam, and met with an unduly harsh fate.

There are those who use sophisticated methods whereby South could determine that North held three trumps and only a doubleton heart. That information would make a grand slam a reasonable contract. Without such refined methods,

South simply blasted his way into what was rated to be a laydown contract of six spades.

West reasoned that declarer might want to ruff some hearts in dummy, so he led a trump. Declarer won in hand and, without giving the contract the slightest thought, decided to do exactly what West anticipated. South cashed the ace of hearts and continued with the king, and the roof fell in.

West ruffed and exited with a trump and declarer, who had already lost a trick, found himself looking at two heart losers and only one trump on the board as a ruff.

South cashed the ace-king of clubs in the forlorn hope that some minor miracle would occur. When nothing materialized, declarer conceded down one.

South's play of the hand would have been correct had the contract been seven spades. But since it was only six spades, that contract could have been secured by taking a simple precaution. Declarer should cash only one high heart and then exit with a low heart. No matter what the defenders do, declarer will then be able to ruff his remaining heart loser with dummy's high trump, then claim the rest of the tricks.

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Famine in April, Ethiopia warns

ADDIS ABABA (R) — As relief agencies prepared Sunday to send a first food convoy across the front line into rebel-held areas of northern Ethiopia, the government warned that serious famine could strike the drought-hit region next month.

"The problem of famine as much would start in April. That is why we say this is a critical period," Yilma Kassaye, head of the government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), said.

The government and the rebels have agreed that a consortium of church-based relief agencies, the Joint Relief Partnership (JRP), may truck food across the military lines into rebel-held areas of Wollo and Tigre provinces where an officially estimated one million people face starvation.

But the JRP's "safe passage" operation will only relieve part of Ethiopia's famine problem. Some 4.5 million people face starvation in northern Ethiopia

this year due to a severe drought which has been aggravated by the civil war.

A critical situation is developing in the Dead Sea province of Eritrea, where the main port Masawa has been in rebel hands since mid-February.

The government-held towns in the central highlands of Eritrea — including the regional capital, Asmara — can only be reached by plane. Nearly two million people in the province face imminent food shortages.

The government has appealed to foreign donors to finance a massive airlift of food aid to Asmara from Asab, the only commercial port in Ethiopia still in government hands.

Western donors and the United Nations are more attracted by a rebel proposal for Masawa to be used as a free port for channelling food aid into both government and rebel held areas.

Yilma was adamant, however,

that an airlift could supply the needs of Eritrea and he reiterated the government's opposition to using Masawa as an entry point for food aid while the port remained in rebel hands.

The RRC sent a single plane-load of relief supplies from Asab to Asmara Saturday, but Yilma said his organisation lacked funds to mount regular flights to the beleaguered city.

The government and independent relief organisations say there would be immense logistical problems in trucking food over 1,200 kilometres of mountainous roads through rebel territory from Asab to Asmara.

The JRP's first convoy for the Wollo and Tigre relief operations was assembling in Dessie, the capital of Wollo province, and Yilma said he expected it to roll across the battle zone just north of Dessie Tuesday.

Western donors are urging the Soviet-backed government and

the two main rebel groups in northern Ethiopia to declare a ceasefire to facilitate famine relief operations.

"The main concern of my intervention was to get the government to agree to an immediate ceasefire in the corridors which would be used for food delivery," Canada's Minister for Aid and Development Monique Landry said at the end of a 24-hour visit to Addis Ababa Sunday.

So far, donors have pledged more than 400,000 tonnes of food aid to tackle the hunger arising from Ethiopia's third major drought in seven years.

"If more food aid is needed, we will supply more food... but there is no point in giving it if you can't deliver it," Landry told Reuters.

She said Canada had so far pledged 50 million Canadian dollars to tackle the latest famine in Ethiopia.

Relief operations into rebel areas have been mounted from neighbouring Sudan.

U.S. to go ahead with SDI tests in Pacific

KWAJALEIN, Marshall Islands (R) — The U.S. will go ahead with the first major field tests of Star Wars weapons technology by June despite controversy over budget cuts for big-ticket weapon systems in Washington, a senior U.S. army general said.

"Kwajalein Atoll is ideally suited for the tests because of its location. The operation at Kwajalein will continue to be strong," said Lieutenant General Robert Hammond, the commander of the army's Strategic Defense Command.

"The mission at Kwajalein is increasing and it will be properly resourced," he said, after visiting the mid-Pacific test site last week. Hammond, who is based in Washington, said construction of new missile facilities and ground-based radar will go ahead despite plans announced by U.S. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney to close more than 100 military bases in the United States.

The U.S. army has spent millions of dollars to build missile launching and support facilities for the first field tests of Star Wars weapons technology, known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), at the test site at Kwajalein, 6,700 kilometres west of California.

The army will try to intercept and destroy unarmed missiles fired from California before they land in the waters around the atoll.

Hammond, speaking in an interview Friday, said they will use computers, infrared sensors and ground-based radar to guide rockets to destroy the missiles in the skies above Kwajalein.

The army will receive at least a third of the \$3.8 billion approved by the U.S. Congress to develop the Star Wars programme, he said.

The atoll will see a rapid expansion of its facilities. It is already the primary U.S. army missile range where MX, Trident and Minuteman missiles are tested on a regular basis.

Thatcher to stay on to fight next elections

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, brushing aside pressure from critics to resign, was quoted Sunday as saying she would fight "every inch of the way" to win a fourth general election.

She said in an interview with the Sunday Express newspaper that the policies of her ruling Conservative Party were right despite high interest rates, protests over a new poll tax and huge leads by the opposition Labour Party in opinion polls.

"Frequently the policies that are absolutely right have two effects — the short term is difficult and the long term is beneficial. You have to have the courage to stick to it," she said.

She dismissed Labour's claim that the Conservative Party was in terminal decline but acknowledged that the next general election would be a tough fight. "I have always found elections tough. I have never assumed we would win."

"We fight every inch of the

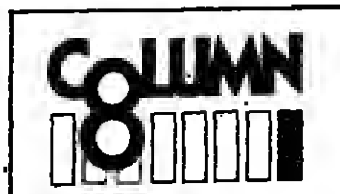
way. We fight on a very good manifesto always. We always know where we are going and people know we will stick to our chosen course," Thatcher said.

Thatcher brushed aside reports that at least a quarter of Conservative members of parliament wanted her to quit before the next general election and that some were plotting to topple her.

"I do not believe many are doing that. You get ups and downs in politics and most of us know how to stay steady through it."

She recognised that the government's unpopularity reflected unease about high repayments for home owners and the poll tax but dismissed talk of an economic recession.

"Look at the amount of retail sales, the amount of spending, the amount of overseas holidays. This is not a poor country." She said the benefits of the poll tax, a new levy replacing property taxes, would eventually become apparent.



France's new opera house opens

PARIS (R) — France's new national opera house, plagued by financial problems, technical headaches and artistic squabbles, staged its grand opening nine months late Saturday with a glittering capacity audience and a near disaster. The audience gasped and singers in the Bastille Opera House crouched in horror when a huge prop crashed into a steel curtain sending splinters flying onto the stage below during the opening-night performance of a neglected work by 19th century French composer Hector Berlioz.

But the first Paris performance of the Trojans, a five-and-a-half-hour epic chosen for its patriotic associations, continued despite the hitch in the elaborate computer-controlled scene-shifting machinery and the first-night crowd later roared its approval. The 2,700-seat house, which Chairman Pierre Berge hopes will one day rival the great opera houses of Vienna, La Scala in Milan and New York's Met, was packed for what one of only 12 performances of its first season. That star of the show, the black soprano Grace Bumbury in the role of Cassandra, took numerous curtain calls for her full-throated performance. Fans called out "bravo" and threw flowers on stage at the end of the first scene. The opera house, conceived by Socialist President Francois Mitterrand in 1982 to bring a traditionally elitist art to the people, dominates the square where Parisians stormed the Bastille Prison at the start of the 1789 French Revolution. Built at a cost of 2.2 billion francs (\$385 million), it was initially scheduled to open last July during celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the revolution.

Stars attend AIDS benefit concert

NEW YORK (AP) — Some of the biggest names in the music industry turned out Saturday night for a benefit concert billed as the single largest fund-raising event for AIDS. The "that's what friends are for" concert at Radio City Music Hall was expected to raise between \$2 million and \$3 million. Carly Simon, Whitney Houston, Air Supply, the Eurythmics, Dionne Warwick, Jermaine Jackson, Daryl Hall and John Oates, Patti Smith, Milli Vanilli and Kenny G. were among those artists scheduled to perform. The concert was sponsored by Arista Records, which was celebrating its 15th anniversary. Proceeds from the concert were earmarked for the Gay Men's Health Crisis and other AIDS organisations. The health crisis group, founded in 1981, has over 1,000 volunteers who provide support services to more than 2,700 people with AIDS.

Swedes queue to get married

STOCKHOLM (SIP) — New legislation on eligibility for a widow's pension has caused a mad dash to the altar in Sweden during the last month of the eighties, according to preliminary figures from statistics Sweden. More than 100,000 couples got married in 1989 as opposed to some 40,000 during the preceding years. Churches and registry offices were particularly busy during December 1989 when 55,000 last minute weddings were conducted, more than half of the record year's total. Up until October 1989 marriage figures indicated a "normal year." Statistics Sweden says, but when the news broke about the new legislation effective from 1990, a large number of cohabiting couples decided to exchange marriage vows.

Global weather (major world cities)

| | MIN. | MAX. | Weather |
|--------------|------|------|-----------|
| AMSTERDAM | 06 | 10 | Clear |
| ATHENS | 09 | 21 | 70 Clear |
| BAHRAIN | 17 | 33 | 23 Cloudy |
| BANGKOK | 26 | 73 | 35 Clear |
| Buenos Aires | 15 | 30 | 64 Rain |
| CAIRO | 13 | 23 | 73 Clear |
| CHICAGO | 08 | 38 | 08 Clear |
| COPENHAGEN | 09 | 20 | 68 Clear |
| FRANKFURT | 03 | 37 | 20 Clear |
| GENOVA | 01 | 34 | 61 Clear |
| HONG KONG | 17 | 23 | 70 Clear |
| ISTANBUL | 08 | 15 | 59 Clear |
| JAKARTA | 14 | 27 | 73 Clear |
| LOS ANGELES | 57 | 14 | 57 Clear |
| MADRID | 09 | 23 | 73 Clear |
| MEXICO | 22 | 72 | 31 Cloudy |
| MONTREAL | 09 | 41 | 52 Rain |
| MOSCOW | 03 | 27 | 07 Clear |
| NEW DELHI | 19 | 66 | 81 Clear |
| NEW YORK | 16 | 61 | 52 Clear |
| PARIS | 09 | 21 | 70 Clear |
| ROME | 07 | 21 | 70 Clear |
| SYDNEY | 19 | 26 | 25 Cloudy |
| TOKYO | 08 | 16 | 64 Cloudy |
| VIENNA | 06 | 14 | 54 Clear |

Min. - indicates missing information.

Khmer Rouge moves base camps back into Cambodia

O-TAPOK, Cambodia (R) — Khmer Rouge guerrillas have moved their families back into Cambodia from secret camps in Thailand and are building new rear bases in the forests for their war against the Vietnamese-backed government.

The exodus of about 20,000 women, children, old people and wounded began two months ago and appeared to be completed this weekend, according to the Khmer Rouge and relief officials in the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet.

In O-Tapok, a few steps across the frontier in the bush some 20 kilometres from Aranyaprathet, Khmer Rouge soldiers wearing Chinese fatigues and rubber sandals were building huts on stilts from bamboo and thatch. Army capes served as screens and

ammunition boxes as furniture. The women and hordes of children seemed cheerful and gave no impression they were there against their will.

One soldier, Mit Ton, said he returned from the frontline three days ago to rest and see his wife and two children.

They had enough food but were short of medicine. The children suffered from fevers and headaches but a malaria — the scourge of this border area — had not hit, he said.

The children were told not to play in the forest because it was heavily mined. A number of explosions were heard during this visit but it was explained that these were fishermen using grenades instead of nets.

The move from the camps in

Thailand — whose locations were not widely known — was prompted largely by Thai government concern. Thai and relief sources said.

Following the September withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops who were spearheading the Phnom Penh government's military effort, Bangkok found it harder to justify its tolerance of the Khmer Rouge, they said.

The Chinese-backed guerrillas — referred to as the "genocidal Pol Pot clique" by Phnom Penh — earned a reputation for brutal fanaticism during their 1975-1979 rule of Cambodia.

International human rights groups estimate as many as one million Cambodians may have died from starvation, execution or overwork before a Vietnamese invasion toppled Pol Pot.

Chinese leaders call for unity

PEKING (R) — China's leaders assembled Sunday to deliver a tough message to the nation, calling for political stability as testing anniversaries of anti-government protests approach.

President Yang Shangkun led Communist Party and government leaders into Peking's Great Hall of the People for the annual session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which acts as their advisory body.

Several octogenarians had to be assisted to their seats on the rostrum and 81-year-old conference chairman Li Xiangnan was helped to his feet for the national anthem.

The conference work report delivered to about 2,000 delegates said their first task was to "preserve and develop political stability and unity."

Hawke leads party into elections Saturday

SYDNEY (AP) — Prime Minister Bob Hawke leads his ruling Labour Party into a closely fought general election Saturday, hoping his enduring popularity will help achieve a fourth straight Labour victory.

Hawke, who assumed power in 1983 and was re-elected one year later and again in 1987, called the contest against the leading opposition group, the Liberal-National Party Coalition, a crucial one.

"I believe the election is the most important one since 1949," said Hawke, referring to the year Labour lost and the Liberal Party took over for 23 straight years. "The election will essentially determine the character of the nation that we are going to have in the 21st century."

The coalition of the Liberal-National Party is led by Andrew Peacock, a 51-year-old former foreign minister, who predicts a 16-seat opposition victory.

Peacock is making his second — and maybe last — bid for the prime ministership. He has asked Australians to dump the Labour government in favour of one that "will work" for Australia's poorer working people.

There are 10 million eligible voters in the country of 16.5

million, and voting is compulsory.

Labour currently has 85 seats in the 148-seat House of Representatives, which chooses the government. The Liberal Party has 45 seats and its coalition partner National Party has 18 seats.

In the wings is an apparently large and disenchanted third force — of Australian Democrats, Greens and independent candidates — who appear to be commanding about 20 per cent of the vote, according to the polls.

The opposition coalition needs only a swing of 2.6 per cent to take power, according to political analysts.

Regardless of Saturday's outcome, Australian foreign policy is unlikely to change. The two main parties espouse similar policies and support continued close relations with the United States.

The campaign has been characterised by several newspapers as uneventful. The Sydney Morning Herald said that as the election looms, it has become increasingly clear that "the two major candidates have the combined charisma of a wet salad sandwich."

The tabloid Daily Telegraph of Sydney asked, "excuse us, but has anyone seen the election campaign?"

Against a background of 6.5 per cent unemployment and 18 per cent interest rates the Daily Telegraph commented, "the federal election campaign is drifting on an ocean of apathy because so many Australian families are drowning in a sea of debt and feel they are living in a sinking country."

Hawke called the election in February. He allowed only 36 days for campaigning, three above the minimum requirement of 33, saying, "we would have gone collectively bonkers" if campaigning had gone longer.

Hawke said re-election of his government would put Australia on the right political course for years to come. The former trade union leader had expressed hope of leading Labour into a fifth election before retiring. Meanwhile, Peacock's campaign has been dismissed by acerbic Federal Treasurer Paul Keating, who noting his last bid for the prime ministership, remarked, "a soufflé only rises once."

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

3 killed in Bangladesh train crash

DHAKA (R) — Two freight cars and a passenger coach plunged into a river near Dhaka, killing three people and injuring another 20, railway officials said Sunday. The accident occurred late Saturday at Golaghat Rail Bridge in Gazipur district, 32 kilometres north of Dhaka. The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said three bodies were recovered from the river Sunday morning and the 20 injured were taken to hospitals overnight. The train carried three coaches, they said. The independent Bengali-language newspaper Inquilab said at least 50 people were injured in the crash. The cause of the accident was not immediately known and senior railway officials were at the site to supervise rescue work, the officials said. It was also not known how many people were on the train, which was travelling from Dhaka to Bahadurabad, a distance of 120 kilometres.

Bomb destroys DEA office in Florida

FORT MYERS, Florida (R) — A powerful bomb thrown into a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) office has destroyed the building and all records in it in the first direct attack on a DEA facility, authorities said. The fire left the new office building a charred shell. No one was injured, but damage was estimated at about \$4 million, said a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) spokesman. Spokesman Allen McCreight told reporters that authorities were "taking this very seriously," noting that this was the first time a DEA facility had been directly attacked. Some local officials speculated that the explosions may be linked to a grand jury indictment handed up here last week which named four people in drug-related crimes. Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Kehoe said, however, "we don't have any suspects, but virtually anyone we've prosecuted over the last year has the potential to be looked at." The early morning attack came about three hours after a nearby blast in a residential street. No one was hurt in that explosion either. DEA sources said both blasts were caused by pipe bombs. Officials declined to comment on whether the two explosions were connected or who the possible target of the residential explosion might have been.

16 killed in Japan supermarket fire

TOKYO (R) — A fire in a five-storey supermarket in western Japan killed at least 16 and injured six, a fire station spokesman said Sunday. The spokesman said the fire in the town of Amagasaki started at 12.40 p.m. (0340 GMT) and was still smouldering. He said two of the injured were hurt jumping from the supermarket's fourth floor to escape the flames. He said more bodies might be found. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

Chinese leader congratulates Gorbachev

PEKING (AP) — Chinese President Yang Shangkun sent congratulations to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on his election as president, an official newspaper said Sunday. The two-paragraph telegram, sent Saturday, was carried in full in the Communist Party newspaper, the People's Daily. There was no explanation why Yang waited two days after Gorbachev's election to send the message. "It is in the interest of the peoples of the two countries and is beneficial to the peace and stability of Asia and the whole world to develop good neighbourly relations of friendship between our two countries," Yang wrote. Gorbachev has tried to move the base of power from the Communist Party, which has ruled for seven decades, to the government. In February, the party agreed to give up its leading role, and the parliament last week gave the presidency sweeping new constitutional powers.

Floods force 1,500 from homes in U.S.

MUDDY floodwaters filled a southern Alabama courthouse, submerged a school and forced at least 1,500 people out of their homes after a levee burst Saturday under the strain of 16 inches of rain in two days. "I have a feeling when I go back everything I own will be gone," said Debra Samuel, who fled her home near the flooded Pea River. Also in Alabama, six people drowned when their car ran off a back road into a rain-swollen creek where a bridge had washed out, while a Georgia woman died after her apparently drove into a creek and her car was washed away. Most of western Georgia was under flood warnings Saturday although rain had finally tapered off after a two-day deluge.

Mongolian leadership promises multi-party elections

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia (AP) — A leading instigator of Mongolia's leap toward democracy, a graduate student named Zorig, wore only the slightest of smiles on what appeared to be a day of great triumph for his four-month-old opposition movement.

The ruling Communist Party's new leaders — replacing those whom the opposition successfully demanded resign — had just promised multi-party elections for the first time in Mongolia's history.

"It was just as I expected," Zorig said. "They have to reform."

But now his fledgling Mongolian Democratic Party and three other opposition parties face a new problem: Deciding if the Communist Party is sincere or is merely trying to coopt and control the opposition by adopting its slogans of democracy and human rights.

On the surface, the forces of reform appear to have swept through Mongolia's Stalinist political system as swiftly and surely as national hero Genghis Khan's warriors swept through Central Asia in the 13th century in Mongolia's last glory days.

In the space of a week, the Mongolian People's Party renounced its constitutional guarantee of power, scheduled a

full party congress to make more leadership changes and promised to work on equal terms with opposition groups that want democracy and market-style economic reforms.

It agreed to hold a referendum on the legitimacy of the current legislature, which rubber stamps party decisions, and draft a new election law. President Jambyn Batmönkh and Prime Minister Donsaayn Sodnom offered to resign, and the legislature may accept their resignations next week.

But the apparatus of 69 years of Communist rule remains in place. No one has suggested dismantling the dreaded Committee of Public Security, Mongolia's KGB.

It is not clear if old rules, such as the ban on proselytizing outside Mongolia's one remaining Buddhist monastery, still hold.

Not is it clear if the ousted leaders are really gone. A hot topic among Mongolians was whether they would retain their official salaries.

The new party secretary general, Bombogayyn Ochirbat, said Thursday it was too early to set forth specific reform plans, although he spoke in broad terms of improving economic efficiency. He stressed that Mongolia should remain Socialist.

Some opposition activists suspect the Communists have agreed to reform only as a realistic concession to the democratic forces sweeping the Soviet Bloc, to which Mongolia belongs. The party's real intent, they fear, is to retain their power.

As proof, they report that when the Mongolian Democratic Party began a hunger strike last week, the move that triggered the leadership shuffle, the army was put on alert, although bullets were not issued.

The government suddenly made more vodka available in more stores and for longer hours — part of an alleged scheme to encourage rowdiness and create a pretext for using force. The attempt failed, they said, because army and police commanders did not agree.

No one knows for sure who in the Communist Party favoured using force.

"We are fighting for a condition in which everybody can answer such questions," said R. Gonchigdorj, chairman of the opposition Social Democratic Movement.

He said the public knows little about the new leaders, except that all are veteran party members. Although factions in the party have put forward reform programmes similar to those of

the opposition, and individual Communists have joined opposition groups, no Gorbachev-like figure has emerged in the top ranks to push for reform.

If the party has been swathed in secrecy from its public, so too Mongolia has been cut off from the outside world for centuries, first by Chinese rulers and, since the 1920s, by the Soviet Union which helped it gain independence from China and then stationed troops there.

Moscow already has said it will withdraw the estimated 60,000 troops by 1992. Despite popular resentment of the Soviets, the alliance is likely to continue.

Tentative new trade and other exchanges with China also will likely continue. However, Social Democratic sources said China recently has laid an "iron curtain" between the two countries, screening cross-border travellers more carefully to prevent spread of democracy and nationalist ideas among China's 3 million ethnic Mongols.

Both the Communists and opposition groups say Mongolia would not even be talking about reform now if it were not for the Soviet and East European examples. The Communist Party made a few moves to streamline its bureaucracy in 1988, but only in

late 1989, when much of Eastern Europe rejected Communist rule, did Mongolia's opposition emerge.

Zorig and a group of friends founded the Mongolian Democratic Association — which later spawned the Mongolian Democratic Party — in November with unofficial headquarters in a study hall at the Mongolian State University where he is a doctoral student of philosophy.

The Social Democratic Party and National Progressive Party, also led mainly by urban intellectuals and government workers, emerged later with bases in other departments of the university. The Free Labour Party was founded by co-op shops and factories and has the best financial base.

The groups, lacking even rudimentary office equipment, have managed to organise branches in other cities, enlist some workers and stage a series of rallies in Ulan Bator's central square that climaxed with the hunger strike. Together, they claim more than 100,000 sympathisers among Mongolia's 2 million people.

Now, their challenge is to field credible candidates for legislative elections, which are scheduled for next year but which the opposition wants this summer.